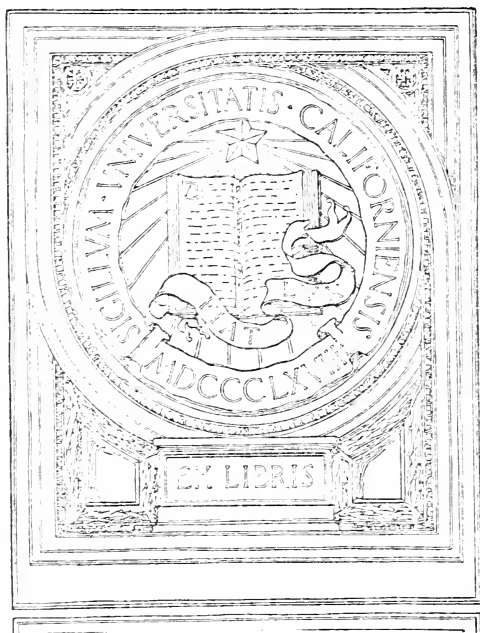


UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



MEMOIRS
OF THE
ROYAL ACADEMICIANS.

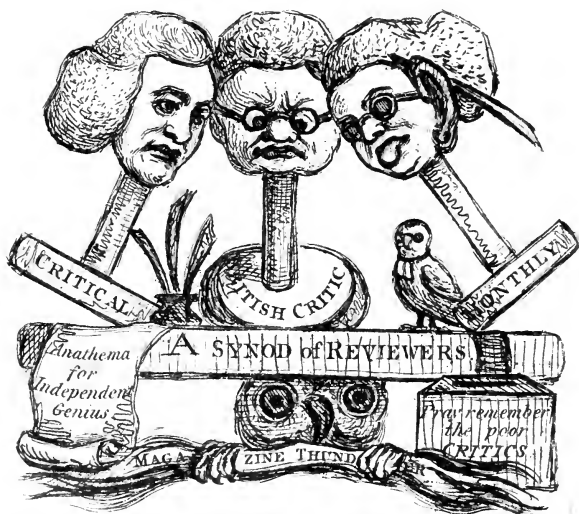
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MEMOIRS
OF THE
ROYAL ACADEMICIANS;
BEING AN ATTEMPT
To Improve the National Taste.

BY ANTHONY PASQUIN, ESQ.



Mihi Galba, Otho, Vitellius, nec beneficio, nec injuria cogniti.

TACIT. LIB. I.

PUBLISHED BY H. D. SYMONDS, PATERNOSTER - ROW ;
P. M'QUEEN, OPPOSITE EXETER - 'CHANGE, STRAND ;
AND T. BELLAMY, KING-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
PRESS

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A CRITIQUE ON THE EXHIBITION.

JOHN OP1E, R. A. No. 29.

LIBRARY SETS
AUG 20 1938
THIS is the best of four portraits by the same artist, and is a very significant likeness of Mr. Fuzeli, one of those ungrateful and indolent R. A.'s who leave their academic mother to be illumined and supported by the striplings of the establishment. Mr. Opie has not brought forward this year any thing to surprize the world: he has retained all his old habits, and some of them are bad enough—an indifferent spectator would be led to imagine, that he was concerned in a coarse woollen manufactory, as he seizes all possible occasions to array his personages in that species of apparel, from an emperor to a mendicant, and I believe would bury all his heroes and heroines in the same drapery, notwithstanding an existing act of Parliament, to prohibit the measure—his style of colouring becomes, in my opinion, more defective every year; it is now in all his flesh, but little more then black and white, imperfectly amended by the mixture of brown oker! or some ingredient equally fatal to the purposes of truth. If he is impelled to do this, for the means of producing a *striking effect*, as they phrase it, I will beg leave to suggest that the means are not proportioned to the end.

HARDING
It is with regret that I feel myself compelled to animadvert with rigour, upon a gentleman, who is certainly distinguished from the *daubing herd* by some genius, but it has been impressed with vulgar ideas, which too frequently overbear the delicate interpositions of taste, which he has faintly imbibed from studying the works of the late President: we have to lament, that original prejudices are so difficult to expunge from the mind. Those elements which we first acquire, leave an indelible impression upon the memory, and the utmost that the most vigorous judgment can do, at a mature time of existence, is not to practise what the fancy has been accustomed to adopt.

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G. DUPONT, No. 268.

Mr Quick in the Character of Spado.

This is a spirited likeness of that excellent Comedian, but executed too much in imitation of the late Mr. Gainborough: The general outline is nearly faithful; but the affectation, visible in those scratches of the hogtool or fitch, over the visage, is disgusting, because it is unnatural. This was the gigantic error in his uncle's portraits, who, perhaps in imitation of Apelles, was accustomed, in the moments of desperation, to make a dash where he could not draw. This portrait is intended for Mr. Harris's gallery, who has engaged this Artist to paint the principal performers of Covent-Garden Theatre.

No. 85. *A Portrait of HIS MAJESTY, by the same Artist.*

I have been often inclined to imagine, that the beams of that divinity which is said to hedge a king, dazzles the optics too forcibly of every Artist who *attempts* to paint them. The figure of the King appears unamiable, presuming, and repulsive; yet all this may be the effect of tremor: and the glare of the scarlet drapery bursts impudently upon our senses, and repels the inquisitiveness of thought, by abashing our inquiries in the first instance. The calm dignity which should appertain to such a personage is not discoverable: It gives me the idea of a proud idiot, presenting himself for admiration, under the consciousness of being unusually fine, and not as the representation of the source of local honor. As the sovereign is not noticeable for effrontery or vanity, this portrait is not adequate to my desires.

THOMAS STOTHARD, R. A. Elect. No. 148.

The Interview between Henry VIII, and the Emperor Charles V.

I congratulate the Royal Academy on the acquisition of such a member as Mr. Stothard, whose education and understanding enables him to rescue the general character of a Royal Academician from the imputation of ignorance, and whose urbane manners render his pre-cminence tolerable to all. I do not hesitate to assert, that this gentleman is the *only* Artist in this country who can comprehend, with keen precision, a subject dependent upon historical fact. It is to be regretted that his figures are not sufficiently finished, but occasionally betray a slovenliness that is incompatible with truth: though the energies of a strong mind, are too frequently regardless of ne-
cessary

cessary littleneesses, yet the frequency of the omission must not be permitted to justify the inattention.

WILLIAM HAMILTON, R. A. No. 70.

The lost Kid found.

This picture is a pretty, but not a capital performance. It has all that *flutter of style* for which our young Artists are now so ridiculously remarkable. The light is so scattered, that it looks like luminousness run mad. The nymph who has caught the kid, looks too aerial, and appears to possess the powers of journeying between heaven and earth. The pencilling of the flesh is delicate, and the kid not ill imagined. I must not dismiss these observations without declaring, that on some former occasions Mr. Hamilton has very forcibly seized my approbation.

No. 89. *The playful Galatea, from Virgil's third Pastoral, by the same Artist.*

This is not a bad personification of a classic idea ; but is far from being a chaste picture. Mr. Hamilton appears to me to have imbibed no fixed principles of truth, as he changes his manner as frequently as his garment ; and though to be a mannerist in trifles is wrong, not to be a mannerist in essentials, which are immutable, is more faulty. Though grace and greatness should concentrate, and be palpable in every historical design, yet they are frequently misunderstood by our Artists, which gives an air of lunacy to their compositions. Grace may attach itself to objects in their nature trivial, but greatness cannot : whenever I ponder upon greatness, my imagination presents *Michael Angelo*, who usurps the idea.

MR. SHEE. No. 5.

A Portrait of Miss Ferningham.

Delicate, free, and satisfactory : the attitude is graceful, and the face interesting, it has the bland properties of virgin merit, unconscious of vanity.

No. 291. *A whole length Portrait of Mrs. Larkins.*

The contour of this figure does not entirely please me, though it is equal in aggregate merit, to any whole length in the exhibition. The white satin drapery appertaining to this picture is nearly equal to Sir Peter Lely : there is a fascination in the
B 2
representation

representation of this charming lady's visage, which has due operation upon the observant, although, they have placed her in a corner of the anti-room, as if it was necessary that she should perform quarantine previous to her introduction into better society. But let the beauty and the artist be comforted.

—“ Where *stupid* men bear sway
“ The post of honor is a private station.”

No. 263. *Jeptbab's Daughter, by the same Artist.*

Promises every thing that is sublime in the art: in the material point of conception of his subject, he is superior to the President, and nearly equal to Mr. Stothard, his full acquirement of the subordinate requisites, may be produced by unremitting industry. To think correctly, is but the lot of few; to draw correctly, may be accomplished by all.

No. 2. *A Portrait of Mr. Rannie, by the same Artist.*

This portrait, independant of the likeness, which is admirably impressive, is unquestionably one of the best, if not the very best, in the present meager exhibition; and yet from some mean and malign influence it is affixed at the very top of the room. If the noblest exertions of the art, are to be on all occasions locally dishonored, where will be found the man of distinguished talents, who will be ready enough to bring his pictures forward, to be neither more nor less than annual sacrifices, to the jealousy of an *academic junto*; who sit jocund in their *bug-gur-muggur* congresses, happy only in having it in their ability to insult safely superior beings, and blighting the wholesome blossoms of modest genius. I will be bold to prophecy, that from such an institution, the public will turn with disgust, and leave such miserably gifted animals, as the knight of Poland, to console each other from sources, which greatness nor virtue knows not. This is one of those low injuries which the oppressed is denied the opportunity of redressing; if he remains silent under such distressing and abasing circumstances, it will be readily conjectured that he supposes himself to have received the usage he is legally entitled to, and if he ventures spiritedly to assert his defence, the malevolent many, will not hesitate to impute that to arrogance and vanity, which is the legitimate and honorable issue of honest indignation. If the primary places in the exhibition were occupied by works of great and genuine merit, the candid critic would be satisfied, but to behold eternally the most despicable daubings obtruding

ing themselves upon the gazer's eye, and, as it were, saying, "damme you shall look at me," is extremely painful to all those, who would generously prefer talents to stupidity, and modesty to impudence; so much is dependant upon situation, that the works of Tintoret and Titian, would be disregarded if hung up in obscure corners, where the light of heaven was imperfectly administered; were even Cæsar reposing in a coal hole, we must be told it was Cæsar, ere we should feel inclined to suppose him godlike, or revere his person; if the place is not appropriate to the picture, the artist must suffer in the common estimation of patronage, however strong his claims may be, arising from his intrinsic worth. How lamentable it is, that there is no precise way of amending this abuse of power: if the aggrieved artist applies to the council, he is informed that his being permitted to exhibit at all, is an act of favour, as the annual display of the art, belongs of right, only to the Royal Academicians, who, however, think it expedient to *invite* other professors to strengthen the exhibition, and as strangers they should give them welcome, and not take every opportunity to insult them, merely because they are inveigled within their gates—what sort of an exhibition the Royal Academicians would produce among themselves, I shall leave the world to determine.

B. WEST, R. A. President.

No. 8. *Edward, the Black Prince, receiving John, King of France, Prisoner, after the Battle of Poitiers.*

This large piece of canvas is intended for His Majesty's Audience-Chamber in Windsor Castle, and certainly does no additional credit to its author, as the subject is ill understood, and not well executed: Though it is the presumed assemblage of warriors, and immediately after a hard fought battle, their faces are as placid, and their habiliments as trim, as if no such event had occurred, or was in agitation. The idea of the horses is assuredly borrowed from Mr. Bayes's cavalry; and the position of the Cardinals, entirely accords with the received notion of ultramontane affection.

No. 132. *The Descent of the Spirit upon Jesus, after his Baptism in Jordan, by the same Artist.*

The waters of Jordan were certainly of a singular nature, if the splashings of this hallowed stream are conveyed by the pen-
cil

eil with aquatic justness. They have the green hue of a stagnant pool, and not the liquid transparency of a limpid brook. The figure of Christ looks like a deserter, who had been recently whipped, and was sneaking off to a surgeon, with a blanket over his wounds. The figure of John is finely drawn, and the Child beautifully imagined. The identity of Mr. West's figures is so continually apparent, that I believe he has a few favourite domestics, who are the Saints and Demons of his necessities.

If it is not ludicrous, it is impious, that such a personification as this should be made public for vulgar contemplation. It is paying a posthumous obeisance to the artifices of wily priests in the darkest ages of Christianity. It must be extremely painful to the wise, to behold the Spirit of God portrayed as a dove, and even God himself occasionally as an imbecile old man! What transcends our comprehension, should not be wantonly supposed by folly. "There is a point which mortals cannot approach but in glimmering thought, it is that which borders on an intellectual image of the *universal Spirit*; the great *mind of the universe*; who, in the motions of a subtle fluid, suited to the visual organ, illuminates the world; who lives in the perfect action of substance; the purity of nature: How can we conceive of that which surpasses sense, but by means of what we know? How proceed to just inference, but by some clear rule of analogy?" Yet, in contempt of such awful conviction, will a callow Artist give to the most sacred mysteries,

"a local habitation and a name,"

and hold himself excused, because a Monk had originally dictated the presumption.

Mr. West has presented society with two Landscapes, which are equally false in design and execution: The arborial tints would form a new pattern for a Harlequin's jacket: They are unnatural, abrupt, and chaotic. Yet this may be judging them upon too broad a scale, as, from the mass of masonry in the foreground, the President might only intend to give us a *peep* at nature, and not a fair and unequivocal prospect. I know no utility for such pieces as these, but to hang them on the door posts of a *cabaret*, to signify it was the *Hole in the Wall*!

Mr. West is so fond of the *palpable sublime*, as to sacrifice every thing to that propensity. Hence his figures have the appearance of being drawn from marble originals, and not the delicate and nearly imperceptible beauties of the nudity. Men situated like Mr West, should labour to become instances of perfection; and when they do not, we feel inclined to lament,
that

that the caprices of chance can counterbalance the influence of struggling excellence. Whoever administers patronage to insufficiency, becomes responsible in his character, (whatever may be his feelings,) for all that influx of pernicious predeliction, which commonly is attendant on successful folly ; and raises a horrid warfare in the young bosom, in which *what should be*, becomes obedient to *what is* ! A lady of some celebrity has very pertinently observed, that “ nothing great is to be expected from any set of Artists who are to give only copies of copies.” Mr West has assuredly made very free with the antique, which is a laudable measure in the Disciple, but shews a paucity of thought in the Painter, who boldly ventures to exhibit his designs, as the appropriate workings of his own mind. In the picture of *Pylades and Orestes*, it is evident to the meanest virtuoso, that the *Antinous* in different positions, formed the model of the prominent heroes. This is a species of pilfering that does more credit to the industry than the talents of the professor. Of what significance would be the great and profound learning of Michael Angelo to any, if the Artist could be equally fortunate in acquiring reputation, without the proud accompaniments of a classic education ? That idle man who can borrow his neighbour’s drapery at pleasure, will not feel often inclined to fashion a suit for himself. That historic Artist who would be really estimable, must be unequivocally creative.

I think that Mr. West, possesses more of the mechanical or executive properties of the art, than that general and concomitant knowledge, and superior information, which should characterize those who *eagerly* desire to become exemplary in the vast pursuit : he has all that temperance of deportment, and resignation of manner, without which, no man can be successful in pushing his fortune within the regal circle of Windsor ; he can be always tolerated because he never offends ; and by fettering the energies of passion, he is permitted to receive the smiles of a king, as a counterbalance for the exercise of his own original dignity as a man. Why he has been so uniformly cherished, where his more polished and scientific predecessor was so unfortunately repelled has been to many a matter of surprise, though no event should be arranged as surprising, which is in any way dependant upon the caprices of hereditary power,

T. F. RIGAUD, R. A.

No. 183. *The Exposing of Moses*

This is a most inexplicable daub, and will be chronicled as exposing the Artist, and not Moses—integrally or separately considered it has nothing to recommend it to our liking. The brown wench, whom he has with temerity introduced as Pharaoh's lovely daughter, would not be tolerated in Hedge-lane; the young law-giver of the Israelites, reclines on a sort of drapery, which cannot be assimilated to linen, woollen, silk, sattin, or of Otaheite workmanship: his infant head, reclines on a bullock's kidney, and the vegetation of the puddle, on which he swims, gives me an idea of the flags of Acheron! Under what pretensions, or through what manœuvring, this gentleman became an R. A. I know not, but in my honest opinion, he can neither conceive, draw, or execute with precision.

I am informed that Mr. Rigaud, keeps a garrulous parrot, I think it would not be *mal a propos* if it was taught the following ditty. A knowledge of the tune would be less difficult to acquire than the origin and insertion of the muscles.

Master Rigaud, study well myology;

Master Rigaud, study osteology—

Master Rigaud, drop these *rigs* so comical;

Why sure your brain is crack'd, by studies astronomical,

Bow, wow, wow;

Falderiddy, talderiddy, Bow, wow, wow.

Our English painters, are either so feeble, or so unambitious, that when they get to the *half-way house* they sit themselves down as blissful as if they had got to the end of their journey; it belongs to Satire to whip them from this state of degrading indolence, and goad them to walk on. The sudden fore-shortning of an animal, which was so congenial and familiar to the bold though perfect genius of Rubens, would appal the history painters of this æra, nor do I know any in Europe, who could with a well founded confidence, attempt such an energetic toil, but Monsieur David, of Paris; and though he can delineate the anatomy with the most enviable correctness, I have some doubts, if even he could effect it with a necessary enthusiasm, and an accordant fidelity.

JOHN RUSSEL, R. A.

No. 142. *A Boy blowing Bubbles*

This academician's performances are ever of that *mediocre* sort, as neither to entitle him to high approbation or severe censure

censure: he is chiefly confined to heads, where nothing of the God is required to enable the labourer to pass muster. Crayon painting at best, is but an unworthy pursuit, and in the prosecution of which a vigorous mind would feel impatient and disdainful. This picture is said to be intended as a present from Mr. Pitt, to a certain babbling Etonian, as a frail memorial of his blessed conversion from the heresies of infectious liberty.

No. 58. *A Portrait of Hart, the Herbalist, by the same Artist.*

Equally tame, spiritless, smooth, and unimportant. Mr. Russell's attempt to make the beard predominate, has been rather unhappy, as it gives the idea of a human chin larded with the fat of bacon.

T. GOOCH.

No. 47. *A Curricie Horse.*

This is a portrait of a favourite horse belonging to Lord Sefton, and if the resemblance is perfect, I have to marvel at his being so highly prized. The portrait of the coachman has more truth; there are various other exertions by this artist, but none that do him more credit.

G. FARINGTON, R. A.

No. 71. *A view in the High-Street, Oxford.*

This picture is very ably managed, and very little inferior to the best efforts of Canaletti! the tone of colouring is finely, yet not laboriously handled.

No. 90. *A view of Warwick Castle, by the same Author.*

This is not equally beautiful with the other performances. I do not think he was judicious in the choice of his view: the water is too bald and glassy, and the trees not exactly as the Creator meant.

GEORGE MORLAND.

No. 52. *Bargaining for Sheep.*

No. 169. *Interior of a Stable.*

No. 186. *A Farrier's Shop.*

All these pictures have the same merits and the same tendencies: they are replete with spirit and nature, but have not their due effect, from the want of subordination in the colour-

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ing and a neglect in the artist, to copy the *minutiae* of his objects.

It may be said of Mr. Moreland, as a painter, what Mr. Dignum, so happily said of Mr. Incedon, as a vocal performer, that the Almighty has taken more pains with him than any other man: yet he must not consider this literally as an encomium, but only as declaratory of a blessing, that he peculiarly possesses, which, if not sustained by studious perseverance will only be recorded as a drawback upon his general reputation.

It has been the misfortune of this rare artist, in his short progress hitherto in life, to become the dupe and instrument of designing men, who have vulgarised his mind, and made his brilliant talents subservient to their own particular purposes, and not his advantage.

I think the creative mind of this young artist, has been suffered to run wild, and though the soil is uncommonly rich, the culture of the produce has been neglected; it has given nourishment to many flowers and many weeds. I do not believe that Mr. Morland has any proper ideas of beauty; his necessities urge him to instantaneous action, and he catches at Nature when she is in a dishabille, but seldom or never paid his devoirs when she was elegantly attractive. I think the better part of his powers lie dormant, from the want of legitimate pride, and it is now probable that they ever may: he is palpably deficient in knowledge of the subordination of tints, and the union of colours, and seems to gather his laurels so carelessly and thanklessly, that it is a doubt with me, if he would not be as happy in the society of a ploughboy as the *Caracci*!

None of our young artists seem to have sufficient fortitude to look distress boldly in the face, and dash through all the incumbrances and inconveniences attendant on a probationary state of poverty, to acquire indelible renown, and rewards merely sanctified; to effect those great purposes, they should feel like *Rafaele*, a divine glow of boundless hope: an enthusiasm disdainful of any restraint that fortune can enforce, but alas, they have none of this indispensable energy: they are contented to vegetate like vulgar handicraftsmen, and glide through their being in a middle sky, when they should all be *Icari*, and struggle to survey the sun!

S. WRIGHT,

S. WRIGHT, Derby.

No. 107. *An Eruption of Vesuvius.*

No. 232. *A Lake at Dunkeld, in Scotland. Evening, by the same Author.*

No. 233. *A Village on Fire, by ditto.*

This truly celebrated Artist has honored the Institution, by condescending to mingle his choice labours with the *Harp Alley* excellence of a majority of the Royal Academicians. Feeling their importance to inordinately, it moves my wonder that these uplifted gentlemen do not eagerly contribute, by their own efforts, to the support of that order from whence they derive such prodigious importance, and not give the cavilling world occasion to remark, that they have been honored without desert, and retain the mummeries of the institution without gratitude. When I was in Paris, in 1787, they managed those affairs much better: the Royal Academy of Polite Arts there was conducted more nobly: every person was admitted to view *gratis*, what was meant as a free display of national genius, for national admiration. With us the motive seems cupidity, and the end deception. With the richest Monarch in Europe for their patron, the arts of England are literally kept from destruction by the votive shillings of a motley public, who pay the salaries of the professors, and find oil for the lamps in the *plaisir* and *living* schools, though the King arrogates the character of being the high supporter of the system. But it is a provident assumption of dignity, unaccompanied with either risk, anxiety, or expence! He seems to possess the *furor* of patronage as highly as the tenth Leo, but I have as yet to learn that he is equally munificent.

Sir FRANCIS BOURGEOIS, R. A.

No. 210. *Sans Culottes taken Prisoners by a Detachment of the Prince of Wales's Light Dragoons.*

This insignificant and accommodating Chevalier has seized a subject, that he might pay his lowly court to power, at the expence of truth and the national character. British soldiers are not in the habit of loading a conquered enemy with chains.

No 204. *Children at their Mother's Grave, by the same Author.*

A groupe of ill drawn children, scratching up the sod with their nails. In this attempt he has certainly aimed to surprize

3, by being comical upon a *grave* subject ! This, like all his works, strikes me as a mongrel production, involving in its effects all the bad parts of Berghem and Louthembourg. If his intent is to be singular, that aim he has accomplished with puerile industry.

It is on record, that a Horse was made a Consul ; that an Old Woman was chosen Pope ; and that a Pig taught Greek ; then let our wonder cease, that this amiable Knight of the Polar Star was *made* (I am ashamed to say elected) a Royal Academician. I have heard much about the doctrine of colours, and have studied the subject myself ; but this eccentric Painter seems to consider the theme as nugatory, and, contrary to ancient and modern prejudice, makes the hue of *brick-dust* the primary tint, whether he is portraying an angel or a demon, or the ocean or the dry land. This surprisingly modest gentleman has taken especial care, in the distribution of the paintings in the present Exhibition, that if you turn to any point of the compass, some divine effusion from his pencil shall cheer the vagrant eye.

This incongruous sprig of honor, and his coadjutor Mr. Smirke, seem to have paid more attention to the *frames* than the *carvas*. It is curious to behold their œconomy in arranging the decorative carvings round the rooms : they appear as having zealously laboured to be mathematically just. Such minor considerations in such an establishment, make the judicious smile. It is sacrificing nobleness to nothingness. I think if St. Luke could pay them an opportune visit, he might feel inclined, in the overflowings of his rage, to hang up the Committee, instead of the pictures.

WILLIAM REDMORE BIGG, A.

No. 133. *Birth-day present to an Old Nurse.*

Of all the junior Artists, Mr. Bigg appears to be the most on a level with himself. What he is now he was ten years ago, and will be ten years hence ; that is, such a delineator of domestic life, as would satisfy a common, but not an ambitious mind.

Every science is dependent for support upon concomitant sciences ; and to know but a little, and be content with that paucity, in any liberal art we may profess to cultivate, it were better not to know any thing. Any professor who is satisfied with accomplishing half measures, is a being with half a soul, and unfit to associate, even in idea, with those divine spirits,
who

who have exalted our nature with their endowments, and amended and refined it by their example.

WILLIAM BEECHEY, A. Portrait Painter to Her Majesty.

No. 127. *Portrait of Mrs. Siddons, with the Emblems of Tragedy.*

This performance does not correspond with some efforts I have heretofore seen from the same pencil. The figure is not accurately designed, and the attitude is affectedly disgusting. It conveys the semblance of a gypsey in fatten, disporting at a masquerade, rather than the murder-loving Melpomene. As a portrait, the figure is too thin for the original; and as a picture, it is too imperfect to be valuable to a connoisseur.

Mr. Beechey has this year most unaccountably fallen off from himself. His pictures are neither so rich, so graceful, or so true, as they were the last year. He has suffered Mr Hoppner to supersede him, which is a sufferance that took place while his genius was tipsy, and his enemies vigilant.

He has eight other pictures, none of which operate as supremely creditable to his name but No. 22, which is a portrait of a Clergyman, in his academical dress. This is a fair, clear, unsophisticated portrait. We have but three decided portrait painters in the kingdom, which are, Romney, Shee, and Beechey; the rest are diseased with all Sir Joshua Reynolds's worst habits!

I have known many Artists infected with what I shall denominate the *rage of Chymistry*, who have almost wholly neglected the rage of truth. They have been violent in their desires to attain a subordinate knowledge, and left the great primary cause of pictorial beauty unexplored. Like a military Tyro, who mistook the order and design of tactics, and wasted his hours in the study of pop-guns, whose fate it might be in future to besiege an Empire!

The blazing existence of Sir Joshua Reynolds has proved very injurious to the *pictorial fry*, as his merit was manifested in the gracefulness of his fancy, which no study can attain; and not in the handling or mechanical parts of the art, which the assiduous may acquire, and which even in him was slovenly and bad. Hence has arisen the common lunacy of copying with eagerness what was in him a deformity, and leaving the *sublimities* behind, which alone conferred worth on his productions! American Stuart was the only disciple of his time who surveyed his artifices with disdain.

EDMUND

EDMUND GARVEY, R. A.

No. 103. *A View of Rome.*

Another Royal Academician, whose qualifications are, if possible, more doubtful than any of his compeers ! As the best application of strength is sleight, so the best application of knowledge is utility. And if a man cannot make every the squeezings of his brain subservient to the pleasure or good of others, I think he need not be very solicitous about requiring the opinions of futurity from the Sybil's leaf.

J. W. ABLOT, Esq. Honorary.

No. 64. *Landscape and Cattle.*

This Landscape, taken in all its component parts, I do not hesitate to pronounce *the very best in the Exhibition*. The repose and harmony is beautifully conducted : the cattle are nearly as good as Cuyp ; and the herbage and water so correctly pencilled, that imagination tempts the admirer to disturb the order of the first by his breath, and the latter by a pebble. Look at this ye Garvey's of the Royal Institution, and blush yourselves into contrition and sorrow.

S. DE WILDE.

No. 124. *A Scene in the Children in the Wood.*

This piece involves the portraits of the younger Bannister, Mrs. Booth, and Mrs. Bland. The assumption of feeling has so worked upon the muscles of this favourite son of Thalia, as to give him in the *contour* a resemblance to the immortal Garrick. In opposition to the dictates of gallantry, the Ladies are sacrificed, to give interest to the gentleman. This is one of the best things of the kind I have seen since Zoffani laid down the pencil. I wish Mr. De Wilde was more attentive to the accompaniments.

J. IBBETSON.

No. 28. *Distant View of Anglesea, with the Pass round the bottom of Penmaenmawr.*

When many of our present race of Landscape painters wish to make a *study*, they do it by their fire-sides : they take an old perished picture of Wynants, Ruysdale, or Hubbina, or a damaged copy from some eminent Artist, and *compose*—by steal-
ing

ing a tree from one, a dock-leaf from another, and a waterfall from a third. By this means we have Flemish landscapes, peopled with English figures, and the same unvaried scenes served up *ad infinitum*. Very different is the conduct of Mr. Ibbetson. His views are taken from nature; and in his pictures we see our own country as in a mirror, painted in a style peculiarly his own. This is a very faithful portrait of the place delineated, and pencilled in a masterly manner.

H. SINGLETON.

No. 106. *Æneas protecting the Body of Pandarus*

I wish Mr. Singleton would guard against a French style of painting. The shield of Æneas, a soldier of *these degenerate* days could not lift. It is too undetermined.

O. HUMPHRY.

No. 109. *Portrait of an Armenian Slipper-man.*

Dr. Johnson once observed, that the man who could outstrip his cotemporaries with his face towards the West, would preserve his superiority if he turned his face to the East. I regretted Mr. Humphry's having quitted the painting of miniatures; but his manner of treating crayons gives a force which I never before saw, except in *Rosalba*, united with a delicacy that is peculiarly his own.

Signora ANNA TONELLI.

No. 348. *Ariadne.*

This is the portrait of the Duchess of Caserta, an Italian lady of high rank, who being said to resemble this bust, assumed the character at a masquerade in Italy. The head-dress is eminently graceful; but, though coloured, it retains something of the marble.

R. FREEBAIRN.

No. 81. *The Fountain of Egeria near Rome.*

No. 75. *Subterraneous Ruins of Mæcæus's Villa at Tivoli.*

I have seen few specimens of the art of perspective more perfect than these. The keeping of the tints in these artificial caverns is admirable, the water is so ably touched, and the accompaniments so skilful, that a contemplation of the pictures would

would make me imagine myself cold, during the pressure of a sultry meridian. The Artist has introduced a few figures in Roman habits, which cannot be compared in the same scale of fitness.

H. P. DANLOUX.

No. 206. *Portrait of a Lady.*

This is a buxom matron, of a most resistless mein. The Artist has at least made her tread with much firmness, if not with much grace.

M. BROWN.

No. 242. *Portrait of a Gentleman.*

I have no doubt but if Lavater was to meet this gentleman, he would loudly pronounce him as an honest fellow, and a lineal descendant from Silenus. The jolly God had few priests more rubicund. If a hoghead of wine had sensibility, the leer of his eye would make it tremble to the very lees! As a painting, I cannot urge much in its favour; and it is filthily be-plastered with a varnish, which will inevitably crack in all directions. I have seen abler efforts from the same pencil.

N. DANCE ESQ. *Honorary.*

No. 161. *A Landscape.*

When we look at a picture by Claude Lorraine, the enchanting warmth of his tints, and beauty of his scenery, almost invariably excite a wish that the picture could be changed to reality, and we could become inhabitants of the Elysium, that he represents in colours so fascinating.—Very different are the ideas excited by Mr. Dance's picture. It must be acknowledged to be nature, and perhaps strictly and peculiarly English nature; but there runs through the whole a coldness—a comfortless coldness, that chills the soul.

This landscape appears to have been taken at the first confirmation of summer, when the vernal tint is more general than when the season is more advanced, as then the peevish East, and the breezes fraught with innumerable and undefined animalculæ discolour and contract the foliage, and partially wither the brightest honors of the grove.—This view appears to have been designed immediately after the hamlet had been washed by a copious shower, which gives it an air of *coldness* that is uncongenial with our wishes, though it is truly natural. It has been the custom of European artists,
from

from the days of Claude to this period, to make their pictures in the autumnal season, that they might avail themselves of the advantages of that variety of hues, which the approaches of death, spreads over decaying animation; for it is my decided opinion, that all plants have their powers of sympathy and sensation, and shrink at the commencement of a blight, as much as village hinds, on the ascertainment of an attorney! The water in the distance, is touched in, in a slovenly manner, and looks more like a plate of glass half ground; the shepherd is well drawn, but the legs of the sheep are thick enough for so many oxen.

A. PETHER.

No. 15. *Evening.*

This landscape, is, on the whole, very agreeable, it is a lively representation of nature, in her most becoming tints; the clear obscure is ably managed, the ærial perspective well understood, and the subordination of the tints of the back ground delicately mellowed into the horizon—it is in the style of *Both.*

No. 303. *Evening, a scene from Nature, by the same Author.*

The distances in this picture are very finely wrought, but he is not equally fortunate in the fore-ground; the boat upon the water, is not buoyant, and the broad herbage I apprehend would be considered as uncognizable, by Linnæus.

J. T. SERRES.

No. 308. *A Frigate in a hard gale off the Eddystone.*

This nautical morsel possesses but little of the supreme taste and knowledge of the artist's deceased father: there is an outline of hardness to the water, which those who study deeply could never perceive; they are as determined as the Glaciers of Savoy. If this gentleman would condescend to copy one of the fine pictures, by Vandewelde, I am persuaded he would forego his turgidity of finishing.

N. POCOCK.

No. 267. *Captain Jones, in his Majesty's Packet, Chesterfield, rescuing the crew of a ship that was then sinking.*

There were three positions, which puzzled exceedingly the fourth Henry of France; and those were, to know in what

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religion he should die: whether Queen Elizabeth of England, was chaste, and if the Prince of Orange had any courage. My solicitude at present is more limited, it is chiefly confined to the supposition by what means this gentleman could be self-persuaded to become an artist.

S. GILPIN.

No. 227. *A Gentleman on horseback, bringing up lag hounds to the cover; the portrait by Mr. Reinagle.*

This is the prime picture in the exhibition of its kind. Mr. Gilpin is inferior to Mr. Stubbs, in anatomical knowledge, but is superior to him in grace and genius. The human portrait is not disreputably finished.

I. L. MOSNIER, R. A. (*A foreign Academician.*)

No. 560. *A Portrait of a Lady.*

There is a labour evident through the whole of this picture, which is ineffectual; it is highly finished but *hard*, and gaudy, but not *free*; it conveys all the worst characteristics of the *French school*, and does more honor to the industry, than the more noble capabilities of the artist; the finishing is superfluously particular. This I conceive to be the most perfect of several other portraits by the same author.

There is a firmness and permanency in the colouring of Mr. Mosnier, which I earnestly recommend to many of our modern portrait painters to imitate, and not the perishable varnish deceptions, which, from motives of indolence and ignorance, they so eagerly adopt. The late Sir Joshua Reynolds, painted the present Marquis of Drogheda; when a young man, he left this country and went upon his travels, and at his return to his seat at Monstereven in Ireland, where the picture had been conveyed, he found to his surprize, that during a period of twenty years, the painting had most wonderfully kept pace with his own health, and from some powers of sympathy, communicated by the artist, had become brown, exactly in proportion as the peer became bilious from malady. All this seeming miracle was effected through the medium of flying varnishes! this anecdote I had from his lordship, when on a visit in Ireland.

Painters of family pictures, where there are a number of young children, who change like the passing cloud, and writers of that species of poetry which is made up of compliments for conquests, the effects of which are liable to be done away, before the ink is dry; are much to be pitied. When, many years ago, Mr. Zoffanii, the painter, began his family picture
of

of the present Royal family, there were ten children : he made his sketch accordingly, and attending two or three times, went on with finishing the figures. Sundry circumstances prevented his being able to proceed. His Majesty was engaged in business of more consequence ; her majesty was engaged ; some of the princesses were engaged, and some of the princes were ill ; the completion of the picture was consequently delayed,—when a message came to the artist, that another prince was born, and must be introduced into the picture. This was not easy,—but with some difficulty it was done ;—all this took up much time,—when a second message came, informing him of the birth of a princess, and that the little illustrious stranger must have a place on the canvas. This was impossible without a new arrangement ; one half of the figures were therefore obliged to be obliterated, and put closer together, to make room. To do this was the business of some months, and before the completion a letter came from one of the Maids of Honor, informing the painter there was another addition to the family, for whom a place must be found.—“ This,” cried the artist, “ *is too much*,—if they cannot sit with more regularity,—I cannot paint with more expedition, and must give “ it up.”

Sir GEORGE BEAUMONT, Bart. *Honorary.*

No. 126. *A Landscape.*

Had I not been previously gratified with Mr. Abbot's extraordinary performance, I should have been inclined to hang with more pleasure upon this very respectable trial of skill. I would recommend it to Sir George Beaumont to study Waterloo, who is a fine master to lead a student into a simple and proper choice of nature ; in which I think this gentleman is more deficient than in his handling. The tree in the foreground is overbearing ; too intrusive, and not beautiful in its ramifications ! It forms an arch with its branches, which destroys the indispensable conviction, that the growth has been spontaneous ! The distance is managed with a better effect, and the whole deserving praise. I congratulate society upon these testimonies of laudable endeavour, which prove, that amidst that ocean of contamination, which sullies and wrecks so many of our flimsy sprigs of distinction, a few of both sexes are discoverable, who have the hardihood to prefer the consolations arising from invigorating study, to the succeeding abominations of what is termed a life of fashion.

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Nothing proves the imperfectness of our optical organization so clearly, as the conviction, that all Artists view nature differently ; and yet I believe none view her accurately. The beauty and intricacy of her works are beyond our powers of conception and delineation ; and we only attempt to copy what is in its loveliness inimitable : But I will not be diffusive on this theme, lest I should check that ardour which is so necessary to the purposes of social improvement.

P. REINAGLE, A.

No. 167. *Essex County Hall, with a View of part of Chelmsford.*

This view is not wanting in general merit. The perspective is accurately just ; but, considered as a whole, it is not entitled to take the lead in representations of this tendency. This Artist is more minute than Mr. Farington, but has not his majesty of thought. Perhaps I should think better of his picture, if the blue sky was less daring and offensive.

RICHARD WESTALL, R. A. Elect.

No. 16. *A Portrait of a young Gentleman.*

This effort is as puerile as the subject.

No. 111. *Portrait of an Artist.*

This is a resemblance of the Artist's own delectable self. It is said to be a coarse and unfavourable likeness. At any rate, the picture is not eminently favourable to his professional character. I expected that the introductory testimonies would be more perfect, that were to affix the seal upon his diplomatic character.

No. 113. *A View near London. A Sketch.*

If the timely modesty implied in the word Sketch, had not operated to my comfort, I should have been sick of this monstrous instance of affectation. The only visible object to fix the attention, is the cupola of St. Paul's, which looks like a pepper box in a smoky chimney.

No. 198. *Minerva, painted for the Council Chamber of the City of London.*

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us." Under what baneful impulse could this young man be induced to make this
gigantic

gigantic attempt? The radix of true conception is not as yet innixed in the soil of his young imagination:

*Nondum struxit Hugo, vix fundamenta locavit,
Det Deus ut possit dicere struxit Hugo?*

This lady I do affirm does not beam a divinity: she is all legs and thighs, like the late Sir Thomas Robinson. The drawing of the foot, would disgrace a school-boy, and the folds of her drapery, are all unascertained and dashed in at random; she is evidently either pregnant or padded, and seems prouder of her *belly* than her *head*, but this perhaps was a discreet compliment to city prejudices. To be brief, it is a brazen, forward minx, unknown to Jove, to Prometheus, and *Alma Mater*: the goddess it may be presumed, is so offended, that she will have no influence whatever in Mr. Westfall's affairs, much less bear him to heaven upon her shield, that he might steal some necessary fire.

As I believe there are none living who are gifted or illuminated with that supreme capacity, which will enable a professor of painting to be a received arbiter of the complex art, it should not excite astonishment, that I am apparently severe towards Mr. Westfall, of whose genius I do not think cheaply; he has capability, but it wants pruning and melioration; he has been precipitated to the command of a fleet, before he well knew the principles of navigation! Hence the wildness and uncertainty of his movements—there may be licentiousness of manner in painting, as destructive to the necessary fame of genius, as licentiousness of manners on a moral scale, would be to the required reputation of a member of the social system; each may be partially respected, even under this drawback upon propriety, but neither can be uniformly esteemed, without a rigorous observance of every prescribed duty annexed to the situation.

As the *graces* of refined nature, are recorded to have been most impressive from beauty in distress, and *greatness* from such memorable events as Seneca expiring, it should be the invariable task of our ripening artists, to compare their own ideas upon such governing subjects, with the compositions of the most perfect masters of the foreign schools; and though denied a reference to Apelles, Protogenes, Parrhasius, and Zeuxis, there are some most excellent examples extant. But it must be recollected that they are to be only *studied* not *copied*! Michael Angelo, is a fine roman dish of roast beef, from which our affected branches of Saint Luke, never fail to cut and come again; but the unfortunate issue of the toil is, that they

they only adopt his wildnesses and incongruities, and leave his divine graces as the cock left the gem, untouched, because they are unable to estimate their value! Goltzius, would be as true an original for such minds: There are few things more diverting to me, than to see some of our modern artists attempt the embodying of an Allegory, they imagine the idea is complete, where they make Virtue in a clean smock; Jove with an indented forehead; Vulcan as a drunken blacksmith; and Mars bedaubed with red oker!

The general reliance upon the force of *puffing* in the newspapers of the metropolis, among our little artists, as well as our little authors, is indicative of feebleness in both, and ought to be much regretted, as the system is now so methodically pursued, that the application of a few guineas to paragraph writers, will make any wretched dolt conspicuous for talents which he does *not* possess, while the man of real ability is almost unknown, as he disdains to feed this abominable source of corruption and ruinous falsehood. Truth and Virtue have scarcely any support whatever, in our periodical publications!

R. FREEBAIRN.

No. 264. *An ancient Roman Bridge over the Arno, the ruins of the villa of Mecenas, in the distance.*

I shall make no apology for the introduction of this gentleman's name a second time, in this imperfect stricture. I am induced to the measure by a grateful impulse of acquired satisfaction; this classical essay is of that sort which steals imperceptibly into the embraces of sober judgment: there is a serenity and calmness in this deserving artist's performances, which in a degree dignifies my nature; the sight of them makes me pensive and reconciled to the ruin which occurs around me, unheeded by the frivolous and the unthinking; they are tranquil scenes which press gently and almost holily upon my understanding; like the finest Compositions in sacred musick! they might tend to harmonise the chords of a perturbed spirit; and I surely ought to acknowledge myself obliged to him, who can steal me so harmlessly and smoothly from a recollection of mortal woes.

I am anxiously willing to aid that lever, which should lift diffident ability into the mart of public munificence, and give him a fair opportunity to be noticed and honored. My antipathies are only excited by the bold irruptions of saucy Inanity and unauthorised claimants upon social respect.

MAR-

 MARLOW.

No. 248. *View of part of the City of Lyons, with the old castle of Pierre Encise.*

I have heretofore been induced to think reputably of Mr. Marlow : but as there is a *bathos* in poetry, so I perceive there may be a sinking or declension in painting ; to speak justly, this performance degrades his name : it is infinitely worse than any thing I ever saw before from the same origin, and is untrue, unqualified, confused in its effect, and muddy in the manner.

G. GARRARD.

No. 91. *Portraits of Mares and Foals.*

An undecipherable falling off from his earlier exertions : this opinion should be inspiring and not dispiriting to Mr. Garrard, as he really may approach to excellence if he can resolve to do so, and will act up to the tenor of the resolution.

No man, but particularly an Artist, should suffer any day to conclude, without the performance of such obligatory duties as may, upon reflection, reconcile the man to himself : our time is so limited, and our faculties so imperfect, that the utmost of all sublunary endeavours must fall infinitely short of perfection ; and as this truth is self-evident from all that is, or has been, how much like a lunatic does he appear, who suffers his indolence to circumvent both the essence of his knowledge and the entreaty of his necessities ?

THOMAS LAWRENCE, R. A. Elect. *Principal Painter in ordinary to his Majesty.*

No. 78. *A Portrait of a Gentleman.*

This is a likeness of Sir Gilbert Elliot : as this portrait is not finished, I shall forbear to investigate its merits or demerits.

No. 115. *Portrait of an Archbishop.*

This is a likeness of the spiritual lord of Canterbury ; it conveys a full idea of the florid, well-fed visage of this fortunate arch-bishop ; and a monk better appointed never sighed before the tomb of Becket.

No.

No. 131. *Portrait of a nobleman.*

This is a likeness of Lord Auckland, a man to whom the capricious Goddess has been equally bountiful : this heterogeneous nobleman is so fantastically enveloped in drapery, that I cannot ascertain what is meant for his coat, and what for the curtain—they are all of the same strength and importance : this is destroying the subordination of objects most completely. Perhaps his Lordship is portrayed in the very act of writing his glorious manifesto at the Hague, as he appears to think so intensely on the theme, that his eye-balls seem bursting from their spheres !

No. 173. *Portrait of a Lady of Quality.*

This is a whole length of Lady Emily Hobart, in the character of Juno : the face is chalky and sickly ; the robe is so white, and so unincumbered with shadow, that it might pass for an habiliment of Porcelain texture : while I viewed it, I was betrayed from a recollection of the surrounding objects, and momentarily imagined, that if I cast a stone at the vestment I should shiver it to pieces.

No. 181. *Portrait of a Gentleman.*

This I understand is the likeness of a Mr. Knight, and is repulsive in the attitude : it fills me with the idea of an irascible pedagogue explaining Euclid to a dunce !

Mr Lawrence began his professional career upon a false and delusive principle. His portraits were delicate but not true, and attractive but not admirable—and because he met the approbation of a few fashionable spinsters (which, it must be admitted, is a sort of inticement very intoxicating to a *young* mind) vainly imagined that his labors were perfect—his fertile mind is overrun with weeds—appearing to do well to a few, may operate to our advantage in morals, but will not as applicable to the exertion of professional talents : many have caught a transitory fame from the ravings of ideotism, but none have retained celebrity but those who have passed through the fiery ordeal of general judgment—There appears to be a total revolution in all the accustomed obligations of our being : men can do as well, and be as much respected now, after the forfeiture of character, as before ; and Artists seem to think, that they can paint as well, and be as much encouraged, without a knowledge of the common elements of their profession,

cession, as with it! This is surely the Saturnalia of vice and intignificance.

D. PELLEGRINI.

No. 79. *A Bacchante.*

This is an indelicate and meretricious performance, and can only be pleasing to tottering voluptuaries: the drapery is bad, and the whole appearance of this wanton inmate of Comus, justifies the axiom, that

“Vice to be hated, needs but to be seen.”

one might believe that a great portion of those painters who have exhibited this year were in the pay of the decrepid Earl, to force his senses to the allurements of indecency, as to do them justice, I never saw a finer shew of naked bosoms and *all that!!!*

W. MILLER.

No. 101. *Portrait of a Physician of the University of Cambridge.*

A firm, faithful picture, executed obedient to some of the best principles of the art.

I know not from what particular cause it proceeds, but this gentleman's name has never been strengthened by a due portion of fame: the reason I must presume is, that he is not in habits of intimacy, or, more truly speaking, *intrigue*, with those embrazened blockheads, who now scribble upon the theme. To speak plainly, we have scarce any person now, who descants or writes upon the *Fine Arts*, but those who know little or nothing about the subject! Hence are our periodical works filled with absurd and destructive criticisms.—I very much admire the noble ingenuousness of Dr. Moore, who, in his “View of Society and Manners,” very modestly expresses himself thus: “Conscious of my ignorance in the mysteries of “connoisseurship, I say nothing of the pictures;” speaking of the Gallery at Wolfenbuttle—It is not in a small degree disgraceful to the Artists, and disadvantageous to the pursuit, that almost all our pictorial treatises in this country, are written by persons whose qualifications did not square with their ambition: it is, in my opinion, truly necessary for all professional men to resist this improper interference as much as possible, inasmuch as the national character suffers among foreigners,

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reigners, on the great points of taste and judgment, from the perusal of such works, either in the original, or through the medium of a translation.

It is not many months since a vain-glorious Divine published, in quarto, the first volume of, what he called, a *History of the Arts*, with a promise of two succeeding volumes at a future period. The book was dedicated to the King, and therefore purchased by the Royal Academy; but as it appeared that, in the course of the volume, there were many compliments paid to one Artist, and no notice taken of the rest, the majority of the Painters thought that this *neglect* was abuse by *inuendo*:—they determined to cast a stigma on the book, and throw it out of the Somerset-house Library. For this purpose an Artist, from whose work a late popular print has been engraved, made a motion to the following effect: “That, as the Royal Academicians had been induced to purchase a book relative to the Arts, which book was unworthy of a place in the Academical Library, the said book should be removed from the shelves, with marks of degradation and disgrace.” This was debated for some time with great warmth, until one Gentleman, wishing to end the disputation, suggested, that before they threw this kind of unprecedented obloquy on the volume, it would not be amiss for them to *read it*. To so reasonable a proposition no man could object, and the further consideration of the motion was put off until the next public meeting, which happened to be for the purpose of electing three Royal Academicians. Most of the Members were present, and debates ran high, some of the writer’s friends asserting that the Royal Academy *had no right* to throw out the book, because the King had bought it. This produced a question, With whose money? And being put to the vote, ten held up their hands for its being retained, and five for its being discarded. This was objected to as an irregular mode of proceeding, because many of the Members being otherwise engaged, had not held up their hands at all; and it was therefore proposed it should be balloted, but the ballot was over-ruled, and the first vote remains on the books:—this, it must be admitted, was a most ridiculous squabble about a performance, which must be approved the more the less it is understood.

JOHN HOPPNER, A. *Portrait Painter to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.*

No. 36. *Portrait of a Lady of Quality.*

This is a spirited likeness of Lady Caroline Capel: the drapery is fancifully displayed; the dog in the foreground is

is ill-drawn, the child incorrect, and the whole assemblage seem frightened!

No. 155. *Portrait of a Lady.*

This is a very charming picture of Mrs. Parkyns, and does much credit to the Artist.

No. 191. *A Gale of Wind, by the same Artist.*

This is a slight but meritorious performance. The spray of the sea is better depicted than any other similar attempt I have lately seen, and though many degrees behind *Backhuysen*, may nevertheless claim attention, and some praise. To be very estimable as a marine painter, it is incumbent on the professor to do what *Backhuysen* did, that is, to go to sea in a tempest, sketch the billows in the very zenith of their convulsion, and embody and harmonize the whole when the storm has ceased, and taste can regulate reflection.

Historical Painting has been very properly arranged as the more sublime and difficult province of the arts, and as it may be conducted by professors of rare ability to answer the noblest purposes of our nature, its encouragement should be proportioned to its uses. Of all the polished nations of which we have received any account, there never were any, where the personal vanity of the inhabitants, was so ludicrously apparent as in these realms; here all human beings of all classes wish to possess their own vile portraiture for momentary adoration, and seem almost wholly regardless of any other production of the Arts, which should involve a general interest, as being generally applicable to some extraordinary event, as dear to the popular memory as contemplation: it is owing to this destructive impulse that our annual Exhibitions are crowded, tier over tier, with the repulsive resemblances of filken peers, fat drivellers, silly ugliness, and simpering dowagers, and so restricted a portion of the encumbered walls allotted, to the cheering emanations of superior genius.

FRANCIS WHEATLY, R. A.

No. 122. *Spring.* No. 187. *Winter.*

Whenever Mr. Wheatley presents us with a rural Nymph whom he wishes to be peculiarly impressive, he decorates her head with a profusion of party coloured ribbands, like a maniac in Coventry, which play in the breeze, offensive to thought and propriety. As this is not the character of our village

Daphnes, why make them so prodigiously fine at the expence of truth? The ornaments of a pretty woman of rank cannot be too simple; and the best excuse that can be offered for their blazing gewgaws, is, that such unwholesome vanity gives bread to the Artizan, while they raise a smile on the cheek of philosophy.

Our Artists have been fascinated with ideas in perspective, that only allure to deceive; they are bewitched with the consequence without paying due respect to the cause: and because they have read that Vandyke was accoutred in silk and satin, believe that it is every man's desert, who professes the Arts, to be sumptuous in his raiment, without duly considering that Vandyke studied, without intermission, for years, to acquire that pre-eminence in the scale of society, which, even when acquired, but imperfectly warrants such exhibitions of ruinous arrogance.

T. PHILLIPS.

No. 11. *Cupid disarmed by Euphrosyne.*

The head of Euphrosyne is not unlike Angelica. There is something in this essay that proves the Artist may be better when he will.

C. F. DE BREDÁ.

No. 68. *Portrait of a Swedish Nobleman in the national dress.*

This is between the extremes of "good and bad imagination!"

No. 88. *Portrait of a Lady of Quality.*

The Queen of Grief.

L. J. COSSE.

No. 271. *Genius illuminating the World.*

This surprizing attempt makes me recollect *Bonnel Thornton's* exhibition some years since, where a poor genius was represented, as making his way through the world without breeches!

W. ARTAUD.

No. 315. *Portrait of a Philosopher.*

This is an accurate likeness of Dr. Priestley. Every Briton should blush when he surveys the portraiture of this great man!

MINIATURES.

MINIATURES.

G. A. Keman.

No. 453. *Horatius entering Rome, &c. &c. and four Portraits.*

These pictures are, in the aggregate well painted and productive of a good effect.

I. Kirk.

No. 454. *Love tormenting the Soul.*

No. 479. *A frame with Miniatures, fancy.*

The drawing of these is good and they are well painted. I am surprised that this artist should go from large to Miniature painting; I think it was quitting the higher for the lower department.

R. Collins.

No. 460. *Portrait of Mr. Wilson, the manager of the European Museum.*

This is extremely like the original, and a tolerable picture.

S. Shelly.

No. 466. *Twelve Portraits.*

These portraits speaking generally, are not so well as I have seen of this artist; but his historical morsel of Youth and Beauty (No. 386) does him honor; it is unquestionably the best similar attempt in the multifarious collection; it combines some of the best properties of the art, and proves that the artist has an inquisitive and comprehensive mind.

H. Bone.

No. 473. *Portrait of an Artist, in Enamel.*

No. 474. *Ditto in Enamel.*

These are executed in a poor, purple and cadaverous style, and the effect is very bad. The portrait of a nobleman, by
this

this artist, No. 534, is in water colours, and more ably managed.

No. 546. *A Sleeping girl in Enamel, by the same Artist.*

This is a copy from a very good picture, by the late Sir Joshua Reynolds, and is altogether, the best picture in enamel I have seen of this artist, and the best picture in enamel in the room: the effect is bold and the style so much superior to his other efforts, that I can with difficulty reconcile it to myself, that they are all the offspring of the same imagination.

R. Higgs.

No. 496. *Portrait of a Nobleman, in Enamel.*

A very bad style, poor and bald in colouring as well as drawing, and resembles China painting, more than enamel.

G. Englehart.

No. 505. *Portraits of a Lady and her two Daughters.*

This is very inferior to the former productions of this artist; it is piteous when the movements of a deserving artist are crab-like.

C. Shirreff.

No. 512. *Two Bacchants.*

This is the best miniature I have seen by this artist, and the most unexceptionable in the room, except No. 386.

W. Craft.

No. 523. *A Portrait in Enamel.*

If there is any merit in the composition of this picture, the person who prepared the colours is intitled to it; if merit consisted in size, it would have the greatest share of all the enamels.

W. Birch.

No. 456. *Portrait of an Artist in Enamel.*

This gentleman executes with more precision than boldness.

P. Jean,

P. Jean.

No. 529. *Maternal happiness, in the centre Signora Storace, in the character of My Grandmother; a Turkish-jew, and six others.*

The jew is the best handled portrait of the whole; I have seen better pictures by this artist.

W. Wood.

No. 545. *Nine Portraits:*

This is a young artist and promises to be at the head of his profession.

H. Spicer.

No. 357. *A Portrait of a Gentleman-*

Those who desire an inveterate likeness, involved in a good picture, will apply to this gentleman.

R. Bowyer.

No. 541. *Portrait of a Lady.*

A very large piece of ivory.

A miniature painter, is among artists, what a bachelor is among men: a creature who is reluctantly admitted to be of the same species and order, and who so contracts his movements and journies in so narrow a path, that the great ends of his being are not fulfilled. He may be said to whisper and not talk; to vegetate with caution, but can never be exuberant and generously unfold his masculine properties in the propitious beam of day. No man I am persuaded, can be a miniature painter, with willingness, who has a large and beneficent heart—an Aurelian and a man milliner should congregate in the same parish.

D R A W I N G S.

Mr. Paul Sandby's drawings, No. 328, 367, 381, should be mentioned as exertions of the first order: they are cabinet gems of exquisite note.

Mr.

Mr. Westfall has several drawings in a manner somewhat peculiar to himself: they are tinted with what may be termed *nicety*, perhaps with Milk of Roses, and consequently alluring to the vulgar, but are wholly deficient in those grand traits of conception, and truth of outline, which makes the slightest touches of *Parmegiano* so valuable to posterity.

Mr. Chinnery has some portraits, No. 380, which highly pleased me: among the budding candidates for fame, this rising young Artist is the most prominent. His progress has been rapid almost beyond example: he has rather adopted a new style of painting, somewhat after the manner of Cofway.

Mr. M. A. Rooker's drawings are Nature rather too tenderly represented.

Mr. Downman's portraits, No. 360, are *vastly pretty* but not excellent.

Mr. Hodges's Indian Views place him next to Mr. Sandby, in the scale of delineative glory.

Mr. Bartolozzi's drawings of the Human Figure, No. 403 and 404, denote him as the Achilles of the art.

Mr. Wyatt has informed the rich world what *ought* to be done, by his noble designs this year: yet why should Mr. Wyatt give himself this trouble to prove his great powers and knowledge, when an ignorant Bricklayer can *command* all the business of the realm without any?

The SCULPTURE, this year, is lamentably deficient!

This exhibition, on the whole, is such as indicates a rapid decay of that species of merit, which constitutes an able artist, our disciples in the national schools of design, are like our disciples in the varied schools of morality and politeness, chiefly aiming at the acquisition of what a great mind would consider as trivial, and altogether neglecting the nobler branches appertaining to the science.

FINIS.

NUMBER II.

THE ROYAL ACADEMICIANS.

THE EXORDIUM.

IT was on the primary day of April, 1794, P. M. that in a fit of folly, or in the absence of thought, I took up (I presume it is unnecessary to add for the first time) the renowned JEMMY BOSWELL'S Life of SAMUEL JOHNSON, and before I had perused nine pages of that inestimable and inimitable soporific, I began to doze, and sunk insensibly into, what is termed, a sound sleep. My eye-lids were no sooner closed by the leaden fingers of Morpheus, than the imagination began to curvet, create, and embody images, with the most unlicensed luxuriancy, but the chaotic hurly burly of the over-heated fancy quickly resolved itself into the following visionary arrangement. I conceived myself hurried by the subtle agency of the spirit to the Hall of the ROYAL ACADEMY in SOMERSET PLACE. The confusion of my ideas antedated the point of time, and I imagined it was the precise evening when Mr. BENJAMIN WEST had the hardihood to assume the Presidential Chair, in consequence of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS having been gathered unto his fathers.

SCENE,

The Hall of the ROYAL ACADEMY ornamented with Antique Statues, &c.

JOHN, CHARLES, and Mrs. M——— *discoursing in close Confabulation, the former holding a Tankard of Porter and a Toast, and the latter reading THE OBSERVER.*

MISTAKES IN A FOG.

During the fogs, so prevalent in the course of the present season, the following singular and ludicrous mistakes occurred,

curred, and happy are we that no lives were lost, though some of their reputations may suffer.

Mr. DUNDAS, in his perambulation from Downing-street to Somerset-place, rushed, by mistake, into a Recruiting Office, at Charing-Cross, where a Serjeant was going to take him into custody, as a deserter from the Grenadiers of an Independent Company in the North, but was released, upon oath, that he never belonged to any *Independent Company* whatever !

Mr. SHERIDAN, on his return from Drury-Lane Theatre, fell, unluckily, into a coal cellar, but the poor proprietors, suspecting that he meant to *pocket the coal*, collared the patriotic Legislator, who cursed them for not having a candle burning to warn passengers of their danger. "You are a pretty fellow," rejoined the dealer, "to prate about wanting light ; why your nose is a perpetual illumination."—"As I live," interrupted the wife, "it is Mr. SHERIDAN !"—"God bless me," added her husband, "I beg your honor's pardon, if I had known you before, I certainly should have complimented you upon the *light* of your *mind*, and not upon your nasal advantages !"

Miss FARREN and Mr. WROUGHTON rushed against each other, in the passage leading from the Green Room to the Stage Door : as the lady was highly effenced, Mr. WROUGHTON exclaimed, "My God ! Miss FARREN, how powerfully you smell."—"No, Sir," answered the Lady, with an air of candid pleasantry, "it is you that *smell* ; I *stink* !"

A certain vain female, who expends more money in paying for the insertion of her mawkish sonnets in Newspapers and Magazines, than would keep a whole family, wandered, inadvertently, into a Pastay-Cook's shop, instead of a Pawn-broker's ; to cover her confusion she asked for some tarts : "It strikes me, Madam," said the Shopkeeper, "that any thing *tart* would not assimilate with the refined texture of your very delicate stomach ; what do you think of a few *puffs* ?"

N. B. As our scribbling ladies are eager to catch at any event that may lead to notoriety, I think it necessary, to prevent their zealously misapplying this accident to themselves, by informing the Reader, that the Sappho alluded to, has *some* character, and can read without spelling.

Mr. Fox's servant went into a surly Poulterer's shop in Shepherd's Market, by mistake ; "My master requests
you'll

you'll keep him two of your best turkies for Christmas," said the bewildered domestic.—"And who is your master?" rejoined the aristocratic murderer of ducks: "Why, Mr. Fox."—"Then tell your master, friend, that I think a few *geese* would answer his purpose much better."

Sir C—— B——y, while on the look out for a friendly dinner, mistook the geography of the Metropolis, and *edged* himself into No. 89, in Gracechurch-street, with his locks hanging from the humidity of the atmosphere, like a river god; when the Porters, not knowing him, enquired, with some solicitude, if he wanted BOARD and JONES;—look in his face, added a stander by, and you'll perceive by the lineaments, that he wants *board and lodging*.

As EARL S——R was wandering through the precincts of Wapping, he stumbled into an ale-house, in *Anchor and Hope* Alley, where a press-gang were regaling with flip and tobacco: "Shiver my timbers," roared out one of the crew, "if this fellow did not run away, about a twelve-month ago, with a score more, from the good ship BRITANNIA, when an Irish Monk wanted to fire the store-room." In consequence of this very serious information, they sent for the Regulating Captain; but his Lordship was released from that unpleasant state of thralldom, by affirming upon his honor, that he did not know the *stem* from the *stern* of a ship!

As the PRINCE was returning on foot from a visit to Lady CLERMONT's, in Berkley-square, he lost his path in Piccadilly, and turned into DOWNES, the Undertaker's shop:—"Do you want any thing, Sir, in the funeral way?" asked the Clerk. "No," replied his Highness, with his usual good humour, "but I think I shall trouble the parish with a *christening* next year."

As a certain Attorney, who is accustomed to flourish in the vicinity of Pall-Mall, was hurrying through the Strand, he turned unwarily into a Portrait Painter's repository:—"Now I am here," quoth the gentle Limb of the Law, "you shall do my likenesses."—"It will be no easy task," replied the Artist, looking him keenly in the face, "to make a *good* likeness of you; but shall it be a head or a whole length?" Why a head, to be sure, you stupid fellow," rejoined Mr. *Qui Tam*, "when I have an inclination to have my whole length drawn, I can make interest enough at the Old Bailey, and have it performed gratis."

As the *Secretary of War* was watching the movements of some notorious *Crimps* in the City, he missed his way, and obtruded upon a party of Stock-brokers in Exchange Alley : “ Do you traffick in *Long Annuities*, Sir ? ” asked one of the party : “ No,” replied the stranger, “ I deal at present in *short lives* ! ”

JOHN.

Have you heard the news, Mrs. M—— ?

Mrs. M——.

News, my dear John—no ! but what is it ? no Bow-street business—none of the Students I hope.

JOHN.

Only a charge of robbery, that’s all.

Mrs. M——.

Vel, I wow, if I didn’t think it would come to that, may I be shot else !—I always suspected that ragged dog with the black head of hair, though they told me he was a disciple of Rowland Hill’s, and prays more in a week, than he paints in a month :—so here’s to you.—[*drinks*.

JOHN.

You’re mistaken, Mrs. M—— ; a word in your ear—[*whispers*] what think you of ‘Squire Hamilton ?

Mrs. M——.

‘Squire Hamilton ! Well, what will the world come to at last—such wickedness—a lay figure mayhap, or some copel varnish, or the family prayer-book, or some ultramarine ; as sure as can be, John, it might be the ‘Squire that stole the bottle of Hock at the last *grand* dinner, when the Prince made the Bishop drink —— ! and the French Duke ate so heartily of the sirloin of beef that I roasted in the store-cellar.—

JOHN.

If you can possibly stop your clapper for one minute, Mrs. M——, you shall know the whole story.—You must know as how, that he was charged with the theft by ‘Squire Barry, who charges ‘Squire Hamilton with stealing his drapery.

Mrs. M——.

His drapery !—poor man, I’m sure he has none to spare—why he lives half his time wrapt in a blanket, like St. Bruno :—he has not a coat in his wardrobe would sell for three shillings in Monmouth-street, except his brown and gold that he lectures in, and that’s too long for him by at least eighteen inches.

JOHN.

JOHN.

God bless the woman, how she runs on!—he has stole no coat but a shift.—

Mrs. M——.

A shift! not from one of the 'Squire's Ladies, I hope?

JOHN.

His Ladies, his gipsies you mean—but that's not the case—it's from a Greek Virgin in the Great Room at the Arts and Sciences.—Zounds, here's the Secretary! swelling like the Mayor's belly on the Ninth of November, and as red as a Turkey Cock.

Enter Secretary RICHARDS.

—Here's a piece of work indeed! all disorder and confusion! What, I have broke up the Congress, have I?—but damme, I'll do your business—an old hat upon the sleeping lion; a dirty petticoat upon the Venus de Medicis; a nine inch rule upon the Niobe; the whole duty of man by the Rhodian *Bacchus*; an old bible on the Sybil; a box of *Leake's* pills by the skeleton; a hatchet by the *Salvator Mundi*; a pair of boots upon the Atalanta; a crutch upon the *dancing fawn*; a pair of bellows on the knife-grinder, and a dark lantern by the Pythian Apollo!—by this light I have a strong inclination to cut off one of your heads, and place it on the Torso.—Why don't ye wash your faces, ye rude varlets? Don't ye know, what all the world knows, that Mr. WEST is coming to-day to *assume* the Presidential Chair!—Damme CHARLES you are tinted on the visage like an Iroquois savage; the ground is *terra Sienna*, the middle tint gambouge, and the surface red lead; you look like one of the Cyclops, red hot from the furnace of perdition. I will use ye as *Tommy Harris* does his scenic Kings and Queens in July, scatter ye upon the face of the earth, to become the sport of the community.—What is this I smell? a naggin of *Booth's* gin, and a pot of *Whitbread's* entire, by this light!—Why zounds ye turn the abdomen into an organ of distillation for liquid antipathies, and discharge a hot beverage to poison the canine species; ye thin your kindred without remorse, and hope to be happy while ye are unnatural. You must mend your manners, ye Anthropothagi, or I'll shovel ye out of the Academic precincts, and ye shall live, like the PIRR tribes, upon the national parish, and beg your bread from the animal you scorn. Damme but ye are only fit to be the sub-
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jects of *Attila*, and eat husks in a Gothic cell. By the ample fist of St. Luke I believe ye hate all arts but the art of eating, and in that I'll match ye against the Theffalian bulls, or the Theban beast.

At this period I conceived myself instantaneously translated to the Council Chamber, which appeared crowded with Students, remarkable by their dirty faces and their ragged locks, to whom a modest female was delivering the following opinion ; after a slight investigation I discovered by her symbols that the amiable stranger was TRUTH ; close to her elbow on the right side, was the GENIUS of BRITAIN, who seemed more solicitous to be improved by her dogmas, than the Students, for whose peculiar advantage it was delivered. —Thus the beautiful and accomplished Nymph began :

STUDENTS OF DESIGN,

I invoke ye to listen to my admonitions with that patience and attention which I conceive the nobleness of the theme demands.—I mean to arrest ye in the career of bestial ignorance, and bring ye into the luminous path of honor, but to effect this ye must study, and be otherwise than ye are :—the heights of glory were never attained by the inert.

The deficiency of education, which characterizes but too many of our Artists, proves a material drawback on their advancement even in their own immediate profession ; the disadvantages resulting from ignorance, are so many, that the attempt to enumerate all were vain : yet I cannot dismiss this part of my criticism so lightly, as not to touch upon some of the most prominent evils. He that has not a due portion of classical knowledge, and some acquaintance with the *Belles Lettres*, cannot possess that honorable confidence in himself, which is so necessary to the attainment of great objects, and to the maturing a great design : he cannot be excellent ; he can only be what is termed *clever*, which is a vulgar medium between worthlessness and renown ; for though his imagination may be inherently brilliant, yet that brilliancy will never be palpable, without the polishing aids of previous document. Fine talents can render no man very estimable, without the aid of a fine understanding, and that can only be embellished by art : Nature often does much, but she cannot do enough, to make our exigencies and our agency uniformly agreeable to those who maintain us with their wealth and protect us with their power.

Ability

Ability and discretion must journey in unison, if the former expects to have her desires gratified by society. I can advance no reason so potent, to account for the high superiority that is attributable to *Michael Angelo*, but this, that his learning was as great as his genius, and being so aptly united, have defeated all competition ; they both tended to effect, what neither could have accomplished alone. Intelligence does frequently, and should always strengthen modesty, and without the exercise of modesty, none can be progressively meritorious. That individual who can be, at any period of his being, completely satisfied that he is excellent, will assuredly never excel. The fallibility of the most perfect, is evident upon a deep investigation, and if imperfection is annexed to such characters, how crude must be the pretensions of those who have not been able to crawl up to the midway of common esteem ? Every person may be so pure in thought as to be satisfied with their principles ; but none, except the vain and the mad, can be satisfied with their performances : it is in the province of education to regulate such overweening vulgarities. Though I have never read any satisfactory treatise upon the principles of beauty, yet they who form their ideas upon this complicated subject in the low walks of life, will unquestionably be more erroneous, than those who have studied to elude deformity, and who, though not convinced that they are altogether right, are at least consoled from the knowledge that they have the wiser part of the world in their favour. That calmness of thinking and grace of combination, so universally admired in *Nicolas Poussin*, was the legitimate and fair issue of classic study, without which he could not have embodied his figures with chasteness, though he might have delineated them with precision. The conversation and social manners of *Angelica Kauffman*, involve as much of that fascination and agreeableness, as is so charmingly visible in her professional works, and certainly she is indebted for all her attractions, in dialogue and painting, to that graceful mode of thought which is the fruit and consequence of a refined education. Had Mrs. *Kauffman* been trained up as a coarse female, she would have possessed all the native fire of her fancy, but none of that correctness of thought which operates to chasten the offspring of a wild and unlicensed genius. A dairy-maid may be as beautiful in her anatomy as a Duchess, yet the dairy-maid can only partially allure, by
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the animal properties of her body, but the Duchefs can rivet thofe fetters by her language, which were forged generally by her lovelinefs.

Men of weak minds deceive themfelves into a fuppoſition that what is locally praifed, will be commonly admired, and that what is acceptable to the million, will be equally rated by the ſcientific ! but in this they are moſt egregiouſly deceiving themfelves, as nothing can be eventually approved, but what is originally recommended by fublime thinking. If our young adventuring Artiſts fully knew all the multifarious requiſites for an ambitious Profeſſor, there is not one in a hundred but would ſhrink appalled from the profecution of the meaſure. I am frequently inclined to believe that many of them think it is as eaſy to acquire a knowledge of the elements and praſtiſe of the polite arts, as to fulfil the uſual obligations of a low mechanic : they incontinently ſeize the pallet and pencils, and commence daubing the faint ſemblance of their diſtorted intimates, and then arrogantly hope, that they may be claſſed as a *Vandyke* or a *Titian*, without any, or very little acquaintance with oſteology, myology, the doctrine of colours, the ſubordination of tints, the enforcement of maſculine or feminine beauty, the principles of perſpective, or the ſevere ſuggeſtions of unalterable truth !

When the Painters of the Italian ſchools introduced angels playing upon violins, and cherubs blowing the flute, to amuſe the holy virgin, Saint Catherine, or any hallowed itinerant in a wilderneſs, it was a moſt egregious ſacrifice of all the noble energies of truth and probability, upon the polluted altars of blind bigotry : yet theſe violences offered to the juſtice and majeſty of propriety, did not ſo immediately proceed from the want of education, in all the pictorial offenders, (ſome of whom were ſingularly enlightened on temporal ſubjects,) as from the diſtortion and perverſion of that knowledge by the influence of monkish craft, who by cunningly and villainouſly combining fraud with terror, ſo wrought upon the capacities of ſome, and the fears of all, that eventually truth became enveloped in the myſteries of the Church, and men either willingly or reluctantly gave up what they *knew* to be, for what they were commanded to believe *was* !

It was a formidable maxim with the Greek Painters and Sculptors, to copy nature as ſhe *appeared*, not as ſhe *was*, which to ſpeak truly, has been but imperfectly underſtood by

by any of our moderns, but more especially our sculptors; in the statues of antique origin, you perceive the effect of flowing hair, and the luxuriance of drapery, without the texture being palpable; with our sculptors, the matter is totally reversed; as they give you, with a most destructive species of industry, the texture of those objects which are only beautiful on the score of grace; and as this sort of subtle definition and discrimination is almost entirely dependent on superior intelligence, it is to be regretted that so many are eager to become Artists, who sillily disdain, or indolently reject the acquisition of those lofty and indispensable accomplishments without which their works are meanly prized, and only entitled to the commendation of that order of critics whose faculties of thought are as vulgar and unilluminated as their own.

As there is an original propensity to evil in action interwoven in our system, which can only be ameliorated thro' the influence of religion, so is there an original propensity to error in the arrangement of ideas in the mind, which can only be reduced to the demands of excellence through the influence of a fine taste: yet as we are not created with an inborn mode of worship, or an inborn mode of just perception, it becomes necessary that we should be instructed in the best principles of both, to enable us to overcome the weaknesses and imperfections of our nature, and be as perfect as our attendant imbecilities will admit. An Artist, without concomitant knowledge, is like a mariner who is ignorant of the elements of navigation: he can never venture to stand at the helm of his order, and steer through the intricate Archipelago of science, but must continue as a common man, laboring for emolument without honor, and sustenance without dignity.

There are distinct provinces in the Arts which must be agreeably and completely united to answer the desired purposes. It is one thing to understand a subject, and another to execute it: the majority of Artists of all nations appear to me to have executed better than they conceived, which is not a very enviable compliment, as the more vulgar order of men may be so worked upon, in the accustomed trammels of common prescription, as to be enabled to produce an imitation of Nature, not altogether disgusting; yet it would be a violation of just criticism to aver that such a person properly understood the higher obligations of his

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profession.

profession. To copy in an ordinary degree will give pleasure to coarse observers, and not strongly offend any ; yet to copy in an eminent degree can only be managed by those who could, on an emergency, create a similitude in matter and effect, to what they fervilely imitate ; as none but a refined Poet can translate, with becoming energy, the poetic imagery of another language.

It is the duty of a Painter to select such subjects for creation or imitation, as shall meet the prevailing sentiment of the most acute and well regulated observer. As admiration is more powerfully excited by virtuous and heroic deeds, than by the contemplation of those atrocities which have dishonored our nature, a good or a bad taste is manifested by the choice of matter in a Painter, as much as the choice of language in an Orator, and both are the issue of a refined tuition : no individual can be intuitively gifted with correctness of thinking ; to acquire that, he must soberly ponder over the received institutes of the greatest masters, and happily reduce into practice, what he has gained through the medium of reflection and study.

There are not sufficient advantages resulting from the common mode of instruction, to enable the professor to bear up against those numerous claims, which propriety will incessantly make upon the imagination. Every species of anachronism will become prevalent, in an untutored mind, and the progressive ages of the world, with all their dependent habits and actions, will be rudely and ludicrously mingled together, to the annoyance of those whose good opinion can alone confer value upon the productions of art : there is no licence appertaining to the pursuit, which can justify the grouping of what is obnoxious to the truth of nature, or the truth of history. The well-known apothegm of *Horace* is as applicable for the regulation of Painters as Poets, who have relative interests in no inconsiderable degree :

*Sed non ut placidis cocant immitia, non ut
Serpentes avibus gementur, Tigribus agni.*

When a fine picture is shewn to a vulgar observer, he does not appear attached to the greatness or grace, with which the performance is fraught, but resorts, like a driveller, to the most mortifying praises, on the accuracy of a button, the ruffles, or some appendage equally trifling, nugatory, and humiliating !

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To acquire a competent knowledge of the human anatomy, is within the ability of many ; but to acquire that sort of uplifted knowledge, which, as it were, refines the mind, and gives the power of selecting what is admirable from what is coarse, can only be enjoyed by those, who are empowered to think deeply, and unite their practical merits with their scholastic institutes.

That young disciple who sets forward with the resolution of preferring *fortune* to *fame*, will never be envied on the score of talent ; if his mind is not touched by that flame of ardour, which impels the inspired votary to a disdain of the littlenesses so inseparably connected with the hunger of riches, he must inevitably sink into that disesteem, which attaches itself to all men of parts, who only imperfectly acquire what is completely attainable by unremitting industry.

The great duties of our being may be as powerfully enforced by the pencil as the pen, and in some instances more immediately, as the senses are caught by surprise, and the very source of habitual idea improved : conviction follows observation, and we become purified from error by means less circuitous than the historian can afford. I never surveyed the fine picture of *Belisarius*, at Chiswick, by *Vandyke*, without imbibing a desire to have the means of rescuing the blind hero from misery ; and felt at my departure an additional glow of sympathetic kindness, which more than usually inclined me to the exercise of benevolence and pity.

The French school has been too much marked with the love of finery, and has evinced more of prejudices bordering upon feminine, than the bold decided character necessary for those who undertake to delineate the virtuous fury of a Brutus, or the philosophic resignation of Seneca. Excepting *Le Brun*, and *Nicholas Poussin*, who was too learned to be a coxcomb in action, I cannot assign to any the credit of being either correct in their conception or execution of the more forcible occurrences, so wonderfully fraught in the history of perturbed men.

As there are various resources in medicine, which are in their nature harmless, and even salubrious, if received into the constitution moderately, that will become poisonous in effect, if taken immoderately ; so are there certain positions in science, which in a limited degree, are contributable to the best purposes of art, but if indulged too frequently

and wantonly, will sow work upon the mind, as to overthrow and destroy all that it was intended to cherish.

It is the duty of an Artist to mingle in the world and its concerns, and yet be, in spirit, abstracted from its varying interests ; he ought to forward, as a tacit philosopher, and amend, by the influence of his imagination on his canvas, those vices and incongruities which dishonor human nature, and strengthen the adoption of good qualities by portraying the blissful circumstances of experienced virtue.

Hope's illusive, brittle superstructures succeed each other in an endless and undefinable variety : they rise to be destroyed, and are destroyed but to rise again ! the wanton phantom allures us, from the valley, from the hill, from the desert and the " busy hum of men ;"—she seldom promises us any benefit within our accustomed sphere of life, but holds her ideal baubles beyond our ordinary scale of action :—she is in the mind, while she is not in being, and circulates her indefinite snares and charms to intoxicate every idea that knowledge had suggested ;—we perish in the pursuit of her blisses, and in a wonderful degree, receive a portion of enjoyment from the anticipations of what will never occur ;—she was deputed by Heaven to disport amid humanity, and prove us agreeably, as the puppets of the animated system :—her dominion is more prevailing than even Venus, Bacchus, or Plutus ; as they are only partially impelling to the piebald sons of men ; but Hope is conclusively allied to all ages, sexes, climates, and conditions : she breathes in our action ; is apparent in our language, and prevalent in our dream !

I never knew a man educated in vulgar habits, who possessed the art of distinguishing what was delicately just in action, much less in thought : the operations of coarse intelligence may often surprise the unthinking many, but will never satisfy the expectations of the refined few. As we should all be supposed as desirous of living in the hope of amendment, so should we all be convinced that without that hope our system would be imperfect, and our ambition fruitless, inasmuch as he perchance would be the happier man, who existed in the total disregard of improvement, and was contented that his common exertions could square with his common necessities ! To remove us from this bestial degradation, and to give an inspiring impulse to the soul, it is wisely instituted that each man should be
eager

eager to overpeer his neighbour, and acquire that imperial reward, which we denominate honor, from an extraneous exertion of his faculties, which he could never be driven to seek or demand, from the ordinary movements which are actuated by any appetite, immediately dependent on our muscular origination.

We read of Achilles, from an instinctive spirit of nobleness, seizing, when an infant, the implements of war, and rejecting those ornaments which, in the usual administration of the young senses, are the most brilliant, alluring, and satisfactory ; yet this effusion of poetry is certainly meant to illustrate the progress of a mighty man, and not to enforce truth. Were mankind as ductile and as credulous now, as in the darker ages, we should have it averred that *Rafaelle* drew the contour of Beauty when a child ; and that *Phidias* modelled a Grace, when he was disportive in the nursery ; —and these assertions would have more than due credit, from our willingness to admit, that those persons were supernaturally endowed, who were but supereminently educated, and unusually inquisitive and industrious :—these are venial extravagancies arising from a glorious cause.

If we should ever become so enervated or contaminated, as to be indifferent about renown, then will the great pillars of our hope, our peace, and our virtue be removed :—I will insist that our love of each other is intimately connected with our regards for the progress of the Polite Arts ; and that in the same æra men become careless as to the attainment of excellence, they will become brutalized in the other departments which sustain the association of human beings.

All intricacies would be abandoned for the love of ease, if we could pass as estimably through life without the embellishments issuing from refinement, as having them in our possession. If a Sign-painter could be admitted, with equal pleasure, into the circles of distinction, with the dignified Professor of Painting, the termination of honest pride, and the suppression of genius, would not be far distant. Our unabating ardour to be admired is the best spring to our endeavour to be amiable ; and the most efficient reason why a Painter is preferred to a common handicraftsman is, that the latter may be rendered useful without any particular degree of illumination or study, but the former cannot ; as an Artist who has not passed the boundaries of mediocrity, is like a Poet similarly circumstanced, a creature in no request, who
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lives without splendor, and dies without popular commiseration.

Every Artist should be enabled by study, to hold a free conversation with the learned dead, so that when he hesitates in affixing a resolution emerging from thought, he may be seconded by the established examples of the most brilliant predecessors. Nature is an immense volume of complicated truth, and those only can read it accurately, who are empowered to resort to the index of science, for the ready completion of their wishes : I would not be understood by this declaration, as generally affirming that none but the learned can investigate nature, as the greater part of her works are palpable to a vulgar capacity : my idea is, that none but the enlightened can explore or penetrate into her recesses, and develope objects that are apparently hidden ; for it is with rich nature as with rich individuals, she often seems inclined to keep her choicest treasures, in the most remote and obscure fastnesses.

None of our Artists, whether Painters of History or Landscape, have a precise knowledge of perspective. In Mr. COPLEY's *Siege of Gibraltar*, many of the figures meant to be very subordinate, and in the extremes of the back ground, are brought too near the eye : the same remark holds good in Mr. LOUHERBOURG's *Siege of Valenciennes*.

Many of our coxcomical Artists are very particular in getting, what they call, a canvas with a grain ; and by painting every object on that, whether ærial or substantial, they very ingeniously contrive to give a seeming inequality to what is in nature smooth and harmonious ! What can be more absurd, than to view skies and tranquil lakes, agitated as it were, by a sort of *quilled* irregularity ?—This vile propensity prevails in the works of many of our Portrait Painters, of even the first estimation *with us*, and surely no one will presume to aver that the cheek of a beauty, or even a hero, is thus marked in nature, and if it is not thus marked by nature, why should they have the audacious and ruinous folly, to impose that upon the observant as a just semblance of an original, when the primary quality of smoothness is wantonly destroyed by the affectation of the limner, who substitutes roughness for harmony, and fallacy for truth ?—If the best works of *Wouwermans* are considered as very defective, because they possess a general blue tint, which is not visible in the combined arrangements of nature, how much more

more defective must they be considered, who in neither the tint nor the superficies are reconcileable to our judgment.

The fact is, that Painters find it more easy to paint a rough picture, than a smooth one, and by their being able to finish it sooner, it involves also the recommendation of dispatch ; yet after those destructive and meretricious efforts, I will be bold enough to affirm, that there have been very few rough pictures, as they may be classed, which have been highly estimable. But there is a species of lunacy which impels men to be singular rather than just, and like some pretenders in the drama, who willingly sacrifice the established dictates of *Quintilian* for what they call *new reading* ; so have we pretenders in painting, who are more eager to be eccentric and ridiculous, than delicate and imitative.

I have observed, that the majority of those Artists whom I have known, have in their early attempts, relied more upon their imagination and memory, than on the copying of a given object ; but as they became more mature and scientific, they have in proportion relinquished their reliance upon their own inventive powers, and resorted to an established original, for nearly all they meant to depict :—and this habit has at length become so confirmed, that they would not venture to design at all, where it was in any degree possible to procure a model. Most of the Members of the Flemish school, particularly *Bassan*, would never rely upon the original conjectures of their own fancies.

Sir J. REYNOLDS was another of these innumerable instances, which prove, that a man may recommend in his theory what he does not embrace in his practice, and endeavour (apparently most seriously) to create an object for others to worship, but to which he will not pay any *devoir* himself. I am led to this conclusive and seeming harsh sentiment, by my knowledge that he uniformly, in the discourses which he delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy, upon Painting, spoke in terms of the most excessive and appropriate rapture, of the greatness appertaining to the works of M. ANGELO, yet no man appears to have studied him or copied him less in his practice ; and this is the more extraordinary and glaring, inasmuch as he was noted for speaking of REMBRANDT with a sort of scorn, yet evidently laboured to follow him, much in the point of composition, but generally in the point of effect. If he pursued

fued this crooked road of policy, in order to cover his plagiarisms, it was the more unworthy in him, who was properly admitted to be an enlightened principal of the national schools of design, and capable of distinguishing between what was generally true and generally false.

At this instant the discourse was abruptly suspended, the doors of the Chamber were thrown open, and the novel ceremonials gave me to understand that it was

THE INAUGURATION OF THE PRESIDENT.

The momentous procession was led by Mr. BOSWELL, the Secretary for Foreign Correspondence, who was habited in the precise academic bonnet, that belonged to Mr. BAKETTI. On its front was attached the significant letters A B C, a composition of the best gingerbread; on his ample breast was a tablet, skirted with all the hieroglyphics, metaphors, and allegories of the rude ages, containing specimens of his erudition, in the Phœnician, Chaldic, Hebrew, Etruscan, Celtic, Greek, Oscan, Roman, Gaelic, Welsh, Irish, Gothic, Islandic, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, Patois, and slang characters. Immediately after him came the President himself, flanked and supported by the matchless Professors of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, and Anatomy. Next came the SECRETARY brandishing two poles, on one of which was REMBRANDT's flannel night-cap, and on the other the short linsley-woolsey petticoat, that belonged to GERARD Dow's celebrated Mistress. To him succeeded Mr. WILTON, with a bust of Thames half shaved. Then followed Mr. CATTON bearing two *bassi relievi*; on that in his right hand was embossed the story of the presumptuous Marlyas, writhing under the lashes of an angry Phœbus; and on that in his left hand was a King of Egypt without a head, in the act of f—t—g at the ten plagues of his realm. Next approached Mr. BURCH, with a likeness of Mr. PITT in bronze, and the Imperial Catherine in sulphur. Then appeared Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS, Knight, bearing the effigy of a Cormorant, and empty purse: behind him was slung an order without a base.—The solemn cavalcade was closed by the indefinite R. A's. who crowded in, after each other, rammed, crammed, and jammed; and ramming, cramming, and jamming, with the most ardent ill manners.

When Mr. WEST had squatted *a la turque* into the Presidential broad armed chair, he looked at that, his brethren,

thren, himself, then at the portrait of Sir JOSHUA, when he fighed, reddened, and seemed to wonder how the devil he got there ; but he was roused from his reverie, by Mr. RICHARDS, who proposed to him to take the following

ACADEMIC OATH.

At this suggestion Mr. WEST stood up uncovered, and became thus necessarily responsive.

OBLIGATION 1. That you shall duly serve our Sovereign Lord and Patron, the King, and never contradict or question, or improve his desires.

ANSWER. I swear !

OBLIGATION 2. That you shall never take one hundred pounds for a picture, when you can get one hundred guineas.

ANSWER. I swear !

OBLIGATION 3. --That you shall never send your own performances to an auction, unless you cannot sell them by any other means.

ANSWER. I swear !

OBLIGATION 4.—That you shall attend all the lectures, and suffer a penalty when you doze.

ANSWER. I swear !

OBLIGATION 5.—That you shall feed the *Amateurs* once a year, and get drunk on the 4th of June.

ANSWER. I swear !

OBLIGATION 6.—That you shall never give a decisive opinion upon the merits of a picture, unless that opinion favours one of the Royal Members.

ANSWER. I swear !

OBLIGATION 7.—That you shall never pretend to disclose the secrets of your art, but to mislead, unless it is to a Professor, who is already misled.

ANSWER. I swear !

OBLIGATION 8.—That you shall maintain all the regulations of the institution with fidelity, provide brooms for the cobwebs ; pipes and mundungus for the Council ; Geneva for the living model, and a clean privy for the disciples.

ANSWER. I swear !

At the termination of the vow, Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS introduced a small bronze figure of *Plutus* ; when the President and all his brethren kissed the breech of the black god, with a fervency that amazed me. I overheard TRUTH

H

whisper

whisper BRITANNIA, that this singular deed of piety had been objected to by Messrs. PETERS and BARRY, for its approximation to Paganism; but had their scruples removed by the Prelate of Lincoln, who informed them, that it was a species of idolatry not unknown by either King, Lords, or Commons.

As unluckily there were no *tomes* of Holy Writ in the building, the President ratified the articles, by kissing, or rather slobbering an odd volume of Mr. JOSEPH MILLER; which it was presumed would answer the purpose as well: they then hung a large pallet and pound brush around his neck, and finally anointed him with a quart of turpentine, which trickled down his long head, like oil from the beard of a patriarch.

The prescribed forms being fulfilled, the Secretary, according to habit, fixed a huge cap, or official badge, of honorable distinction, upon the astonished Principal's head; it resembled a Baronet's coronet, with this unessential difference, that instead of white balls it was supplied with tinkling bells, and that the top was conically fashioned, and fell gracefully behind upon his Atlantean shoulders.

A Royal medal was circulated on the high occasion; on one side was the Sovereign's head crowned with *thorns*, and on the exergue the *Georgium Sidus* shedding its benign influence upon mushrooms: those given to the Academicians and Associates were appropriately cast in BRASS, and those thrown among the Students impressed upon LEAD. This august consecration should have been enacted by Dr. PETERS, as Chaplain of the Order; but the worthy Priest was unluckily *non est inventus*.

The initiation being closed, Mr. BOSWELL swelled his cheeks like Boreas in wrath, and loudly ejaculated—"All hail BENJAMIN WEST, President of the Royal Academy;" at which summons, the Diplomatic corps arose, and with solemn accordance bowed their heavy heads towards the chair, in unison; while the boisterous younglings of the National School around, roared out in the high note of triumph,

O RARE BEN!

Mr. WEST returned the noisy body thanks, and then proceeded to exercise the arduous functions of his duty. When he was defeated, Mr. RICHARDS presented the following

CONGRATULATORY LETTERS;

and testimonies like those might make a Cæsar proud.

DEAR

DEAR BEN,

What I have predicted to Mrs. DANCE above a hundred times is now realized—you are the PRESIDENT of the *Royal Academy*; it is unquestionably a post of honour, and I believe some peril; but as my man THADY says, God bless you, and do you good with it. I have now, my dear BEN, totally forgot all those local vanities which I imbibed in Somerset-place, and nurtured in my own study—Envy, hatred, and uncharitableness, are with me now but as the creatures of a vision, not the hideous inmates of social life. Like an enraged creator, I am at war with *my own works*, and cut up my *offspring* as Jehovah smote the sons of Israel. The appearance of history confounds my understanding, and my *domestic pieces* make me mad.—I have given away all those efforts of my pencil, which common opinion denominated sublime; I have presented the *tygres* and her young to LADY STRATHMORE—*Columbus* and the *eclipse* to the CLUB at BROOKES'S—*Daniel* in the den of lions to WARREN HASTING—My *Ganymede* to LORD COURTNEY—My *noli me tangere* to Mr. PITT—My *Janus* to HENRY DUNDAS—My *Dogberry* to JUSTICE ADDLEBRAIN—My anatomy of the mole to LORD UXBRIDGE—My *Marfyas* to SIR WILLIAM PULTNEY—My *presentation* in the temple to LORD EARDLEY—My *return* of the prodigal to SIR CHARLES BAMFYLDE—My *repose* to LORD GALWAY—My *Diana* in the stream to the Duke of NORFOLK—My *adultres* before Christ to the MARGRAVINE of ANSPACH—My *Niobe* to the Queen of the FRENCH—My *Saint Francis* in extacy to JOHN WILKES—My *holy family* to the EX CHANCELLOR—My *interior view* of a church to Lord SANDWICH—My Cardinal BEAUFORT in the agonies of death to EDMUND BURKE—My *assumption* of the virgin to the MAIDS of HONOR—My *Pan* and *Syrinx* to Lord CARDIGAN—My portrait of *Polonius* to the Marquis of SALISBURY—My *memento mori* to the Dukes of CHANDOS—My *whole length* of Elizabeth Canning to Mrs. GUNNING—My *fungus* on the dunghill to GEORGE ROSE—My *Jonas* in the whale's belly to Mr. HOBART—My *butcher's shop* to the COURT OF ALDERMEN—My *Venus* and *Adonis* to the Marquis of BLANDFORD—My *chicken* frightened by a mastiff to Mr. M. A. TAYLOR—My *Doll Tear-sheet* to Lady C. JOHNSTON—My *vintage* pruned by *Bacchanals* to the Dukes of GORDON—My *day* of judgment to Lord LOUGHBOROUGH—My *Tully* on copper to Mr. ERSKINE—My *sun set* to the House of Orange—My toy-shop to the

House of Peers—My *old woman* by candle light to the Editor of the St. James's Chronicle—My *Jews catching manna* to the Subscribers to the Loan—My *cave of despair* to Mr. FOX—My *Bardolph* in love to Mr. SHERIDAN—My *Elijah* fed by *ravens* to LORD KENYON—My child turned dry to Mr. CANNING—My *smoking* Boor with his pipe broke, to Mr. COURTNEY—My Pig in Trouble to Sir WATKIN LEWES—My dog in a thunder storm to his GRACE of RICHMOND—My Cow in clover to MOTHER WINDSOR—The *Affassin* in Purgatory to the TALL RUFFIAN of Old Drury—The *Devil* and the *Collier* to LORD LONSDALE—The *Polypheme* to Old Q——.—The *Bathsheba* to SIR RICHARD WORSLEY—The *Alfred* dividing his *loaf* to LORD WESTMORELAND—My *Children at play* to the Managers of the Impeachment—My *Banditti* to the House of Commons; and all my *Cattle* to HIS MAJESTY !

April 1st, 1792,
Near the Man
in the Moon,
Opposite Old Bedlam. }

I am, dear Sir,
With the most perfect esteem,
Yours, &c. &c.

N. DANCE.

P. S. Being somewhat addicted to astrology, I cannot avoid combining *events* with *signs*. I ardently hope the *Royal Academy* will ever be as *brilliant* as *usual*; yet of all the points of the compass I believe the WEST to be the most inauspicious, when considered as symbolical for the *continuance* of terrestrial glory!—as you are *looked upon* at Windsor as a sort of bipedal constellation, pray inform me in which of the *houses* you were born? upon my honor, Mr. WEST, I mean no offence by the question, it only alludes to the origin of your *irrefrangible* genius, not to your origin as a mere animal—I must relate a *bon mot* made by my incomparable and divine lady the other evening at supper, though it is in a diminutive sense at your expence: “And so,” said she, “my dear, (meaning me) they have chosen Mr. WEST President; but let me tell him that had you, my love, (meaning me again) *condescended* yet to illuminate canvases, perhaps Mr. WEST would have remained a common R. A. and Fortune might have *led them* a DANCE!!!

MY VERY GOOD FRIEND,

I have perused, with great indignation, those remarks upon your late exaltation, which have furnished literary food for the scandalous in the diurnal prints of this metropolis, since your indispensable election to the primary honors of our
august

august institution—had I been thus assailed by the imps of infidelity, before I was regenerated in the dusty recesses of Trinity College, and saw the light of the gospel, I am free to confess that I should have felt emotions of revenge!—as the *leaven* of the *old man* may be yet unmixed in your unblanched system, it becomes me, as your CHAPLAIN, to point out the *rocks of reprobation*, and lead you, like a *lamb*, into the *paths of peace*; but if the stripes or castigation of the ungodly should have made you *fore*, remember that terrestrial punishment is the peculiar lot of the beatified, as the *Lord chasteneth but those he loveth*. If your mind is not already sufficiently ductile, I intreat you, my dear BENJAMIN, to read *Jerome* and the Fathers, on the necessity of indiscriminate resignation—You know that Lord G—— thinks most highly of your talents, and whoever Lord G—— protects, must be dear to fortune and to fame. As I was perusing *Thomas-a-Kempis* yesterday, in my study, a ray of momentary ambition shot across the chambers of my imagination; I was pondering on the virtues of the *tenth Leo*, who would have made *Raphael* a cardinal, had he not been gathered to his fathers ere the sacred purple had issued from the loom. Do you think it could be very *malapropos* to have a *Royal Academician* metamorphosed to a *prelate*? You have wonderful influence at Windsor; and I should like to know the ideas of a GREAT PERSONAGE on the subject. With all humility be it spoken, but I think I could badger the Devil as well as any he who grasps a crozier in the circles of christianity. I am now painting *Lot* in his filthiness, for the Earl of P——. The picture is in my best manner; *I did* one of the daughters last Sunday morning, and hope to get the other in *tolerable good keeping* before the decease of the present month. My *chef d'oeuvre* of *Susannah and the two Elders*, is superbly framed; Doctor S—— of our university will assert, that all the artists have been wrong from the beginning, relative to the conception of this story; and that the elders of the church had frequently never seen their fortieth year. I was much irritated by a scoundrel cheesemonger a few days ago, who had the audacity to offer me but ten pounds for the *apotheosis* of his wife, who died in childbed of her *first fruits*: had he given me fifty, I would have placed her in an aerial, comfortable chair, buoyant on a blue cloud, in the second heaven; but the vender of cheese thinking the demand exorbitant, his good lady must take her chance with the vulgar, and rot, unhonored, beneath the turf,

turf, at Pancrass. A good hint is not unfrequently equal to the establishment of a man's fortune; what think you of making the story of the *white horse* in the Revelations, applicable to the illustrious pre-eminence of the House of HANOVER? As I have now given you the commodity, it belongs to your own sagacity to carry it to the best mart, and for my part, I know no market so proper for *your purpose* as *Saint James's*. As piety, you must acknowledge, is in a state of evident debility, I shall *implore* Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS to assist me in giving the weak gentlewoman some crutches, that is, to purchase a few hundreds of the *Elements of Faith*, and distribute them, gratis, among the students: surely he will not *hesitate* to advance a small sum from the treasury for so godlike a purpose? Receive my benediction, my dear WEST, and believe me your sincere pastor,

March 20th, 1792.
Paternoster-row,
Opposite the Devil and St. Dunstan. }

W. PETERS.

P. S. I should have informed you that I have stripped off the drapery from your *favourite piece*, the *Virgin*, and she looks remarkably well. I have a fine *subject* in my eye for a *living model*, a beautiful impure—she will *fit* for half a guinea a night, and has all the *necessary prominencies* in due tone—say but the word, and I will engage her myself for the *use* of the Academicians—I have *examined* her proportions—I have taken care of her precious soul; the salvation of her fair body I have consigned to Sheldon.

DEAR BEN,

As the twittering of the sparrow is said to be as acceptable to the Deity, as the more melodious hymn of the Nightingale, perhaps, my lowly congratulations may meet a reception as flattering as those originating from more dignified men: though I felt most *sensibly* for the death of our late inestimable President, my heart was in a considerable degree eased of its burthen of sorrow, by your *most honorable* advancement to the first chair in our council.

As for myself, Mr. WEST, I must candidly acknowledge, that I do not ever survey my *Diploma*, without entertaining a lively sense of my own insufficiency—My God! who could have thought that I should have arrived at such a pinnacle of general estimation as this? To be a *Royal Academician*; dubbed an Esquire by the immediate hand of Majesty,
 and

and have an R. A. attached to my humble name, like the hieroglyphics to the Portrait of an Egyptian Sage—to be all this, is assuredly intoxicating—but to be all this, and not feel the energies of vast ambition, were to be more or less than mortal. Now I recollect, Sir, that in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Eight, while I was drinking *brandy* with some *Ladies of distinction* in the Friendly Islands, a copper-coloured Sybil of their nation approached me with apparent awe, and after walking round me three times, looked stedfastly in my face for a few seconds, then burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, and fled instantly to the neighbouring hills; this singular conduct astonished and abashed me, until I literally related the adventure to Sir JOSEPH BANKS, who gave me unequivocal consolation, by assuring me, that the risibility of the ignorant was *his* greatest pride, and that no better sign of true greatness could be adduced, than when the *laugh of the vulgar* was directed to the singularities of meritorious sublimity.

I have the superlative felicity to inform you, Sir, that I passed a most delectable evening last Sunday with Mr. COSWAY and his amiable family—it is to his valuable documents that I stand indebted for those *inward lights* which illumine the Christian, and uplift the Man: in my callow opinion, it cannot be enough regretted, that the *minor* should be empowered to absorb the *major*, or that an individual so eminently gifted to *preach* should be impelled to *paint*—The World wants mending, and I know not the man who could so incontinently effect the purgation as RICHARD COSWAY—his all-accomplished Lady, the Tuscan MARIA and he, mean to write annotations upon the *Apocrypha*, and give the lie direct to scepticism.—Do you think Mr. WEST, that Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS will *permit* us to use any of the vast profits arising from the Academic Annual Exhibition, for the purpose of erecting a Mausoleum for the remains of the *dead* KNIGHT?—You know it will be an undertaking that will necessarily require *some genius* to effect, and as he *cannot* be concerned in the *glory* or *emolument*, I have some doubts if the whole body of the Artists, strengthened by the ardent desire of the nation, will be able collectively to enforce his *consent*; I rely upon your honor, Mr. WEST, that Sir WILLIAM is never made acquainted with these suggestions—you know the man; and that knowledge should operate like the *armour* of the Third EDWARD. I have taken all necessary measures for the accustomed dinner, previous to the opening

ing of our gates for the gaping multitude. I have purchased a Lincoln-fed ox in Smithfield, at the rate of two-pence three-farthings a pound; the hide may be manufactured into a comfortable winter gabardine for JOHN the porter, the tallow will feed the lamp in the *life Academy* for some months, and as I suppose none of the ACADEMICIANS want *horns*, I propose burning them myself, to mix with TERRA COTTA for fore-grounds.

I am informed, Sir, that we shall be *honoured* with an assemblage of Peers and Prelates!—Pray, Sir, in arranging the visitors, who takes the lead in point of local dignity, a Bishop or a Yellow-Admiral?—We are to have plates, dishes and turcans from WEDGWOOD'S pottery, at nine-pence per head, and knives and forks from Birmingham at half the sum; but in both instances the stolen and strayed, lost or mislaid, to be paid for within one week after the commencement of the Exhibition—wishing you as much *happiness* as you have *honor*, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Your unalterable Friend and Servant,

March 28th, 1792,
Near the Mandeville's-Head. }

J. WEBBER.

P. S. I have followed your advice, Sir, in regard to the disposal of my own pictures—I have removed all the *Sea-horses* to the back garret; made our *Saviour* shorter by a foot and a half, and have *hung up* all the Apostles in the dining-room.

The following letter was read by mistake, being intended for the private perusal of Mr. BOSWELL.

DEAR SIR,

This day, agreeably to the influence of custom, the Royal Academicians, Associates, flanked with noble and ignoble visitors, had their annual dinner at Somers^{et} Place. Previous to the entre of the firloins and the arrangement of the lesser viands, a sort of desultory conversation took place between Mr. West and the Bishop of Lincoln, upon the EFFECT which the various pictures had upon the sensations of the KING and QUEEN, who yesterday honored this theatre of the Arts with their presence. Perhaps it would not be altogether proper or decent to detail the opinions of sovereigns; yet to you I may venture to be explicit, as in your bosom the impulse of *loyal love* supercedes every other consideration. The remarks of my *august* Master were chiefly confined to my whole length portraits of the Duke and
Duchess

Duchess of YORK. Were I to inform you that their general praise of these efforts were *excessive*, you might think me *vain*, so I shall forego their applause of my labours to indite their disapprobation of the labours of my brethren of the Brush. You must know there is a young man in this metropolis who is now emerging from obscurity in a most *extraordinary* manner; his name is MORLAND: he has acquired a SORT of celebrity by the facility of his pencilling: he possesses no doubt a SMALL portion of merit; but unfortunately *poor young man*, the vulgarity of his origin, like that of OPIE, is constantly evident in all he does. His *chef d'œuvre* this year is a view of Sir JOSEPH MAWBEX'S farm in Surrey, with a coarse likeness of the Knight feeding his favourite Sow in the foreground, and a litter of pigs half enveloped by the smoke of a reeking dunghill. Here his MAJESTY made some *curious* remarks upon the construction of an outhouse; lamented the grunterns were not better *tiled in*, and concluded with a Bon Mot at the expence of MORLAND, who the King affirmed, from all he had heard upon the subject, never carried his *hogs to a good market*.

The next object of Royal attention was RIGAUD'S historical piece of CÆSAR repudiating CALPHURNIA; after surveying this piece with the scrupulous and keen eye of criticism, the King asked Mr. WEST if the Roman Emperors were empowered to turn away their wives at will, according to the suggestions of their own caprice, independant of the ecclesiastic court; and if they did thus, if he Mr. WEST thought the measure would hold good in law? But the worthy President, not being able to give a direct answer to a question of such moment and magnitude, it was agreed to refer the whole affair to the decision of the *Chancellor*.

The succeeding objects which caught the vision of the illustrious observers, were *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*, by HAMILTON: to the management of these personages, the King made several rational objections; he thought *Faith* was not sufficiently luminous about the head; that *Hope* looked intoxicated, and *Charity* was half-famished; here her Majesty thus interfered, with grace ineffable, "let us buy the three personages ourselves, GEORGE, and put a few guineas in the pocket of the artist; I think we can dispose of them to the advantage of society; we will send *Faith* to Mr. HALHED, *Hope* to Lady CARDIGAN, and *Charity* to his Grace of CANTERBURY.

The sublime gazers now turned to the contemplation of

FARINGTON's charming picture of the Tower of Babel : this performance took up a considerable portion of the Royal attention, and before the King quitted the spot, he made two memorandums ; first, to ask Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS if he did not think the Chinese borrowed their ideas of a pagoda from this structure ; and the second was, to enquire of Sir JOSEPH BANKS if the Celtic Tongue did not originate with the mutiny of the bricklayers concerned in that famous edifice—I am informed that the King indulged himself in *another bon mot* at the expence of COSWAY, who, he pleasantly remarked, was so good upon a *canvass*, that he thought he should be employed at the next *general election* ; Mr. WEST, it is said, laughed immoderately : but the Queen looking serious, the President reassumed his accustomed gravity, and the jest was not registered.

March 28, 1792.
Opposite the Toad
in the Hole,
Petticoat-lane. }

I am, dear Sir, your's, &c.

J. HOPNER.

P. S. A cursed unlucky affair occurred during dinner : that uncleanly savage BARRY, in reaching over the table to stick his fork in some green fat, overset a tureen of hot soup upon the Duke of Leeds's breeches ; and John, by holding a candle too near the Bishop of Bath, set fire to his Court curls, and burnt three yards of his wig.

DEAR SIR,

I rejoice at your astonishing elevation. I am now hard at it upon an Arcadian scene. What do you think, Ben, of my mingling a few red and yellow, and blue and crimson trees. To tell you a secret, I and LOUTHERBOURGH and a few more of the R. A's are sick of green, because you know it is so cursed vulgar. I have the pleasure to inform you, that my *ruin*, which pleased you so exceedingly, will be completed in a few weeks. My little ALICE set fire to my farm-yard yesterday evening, and burnt the cow-house, the farmer's wife, a hen and chickens, and the horse-pond ; but I mean to make another, and give it to Sir JOHN SINCLAIR.

March 28th, 1794. }
Opposite the Devil
casting out Swine,
in Butcher-row. }

Your's,
Till death do us part,
E. GARVEY.

P. S. Which do you think makes the best foreground for a picture, a dock leaf or a summer cabbage ?

MY

MY DEAR BEN,

I pant to give you a Cornish hug upon your exaltation. Who would have thought it that I should be an Academician and you the President? But some men "are born to greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them."—Happy Varlets ! but enough of that. I have finished my *Cain murdering Abel*, for the rooms of Hanover-square. My *Joseph feasting his Brethren* is in great forwardness: this is intended as a present from the King to the Speaker of the House of Commons. I am now in the great act of fixing *Europa* upon the tremendous *Bull*; perhaps it may not be altogether unnecessary for *me* to inform *you*, that I took the story from one OVID, who lived upon his Gods, like the Bench of Bishops, and like them damned those he disliked. Do you think I may venture to depict the lusty beast in all his honors, without giving offence to trembling virginity or the peery matron? As BARRY'S so good at a *bull*, I at first thought of asking him, but I was not sure that he would not *but me* for my temerity.

March 30th, 1794.
Near the Hog in the Blanket,
Dirty-lane. }

I am, Sir, your's, &c.

I. OPIE.

P. S. In Sir JOSHUA'S time the Students were very negligent of their persons; I flatter myself you will not suffer such inattention to the points of *drapery* in future—If the *disciples* want *combs*, they may send to my house.

DEAR SIR,

"I would have written to you sooner to congratulate you, had I not met with an unlucky accident—As I was sitting on the end of a coal-barge at Greenland-dock, *taking off* an old French frigate, I unfortunately slipped down and *stuck in the mud*.

March 29th.
Next door to the
Cat and Bagpipes,
at the World's End. }

I am, dear Mr. WEST,

Yours', &c.

J. FARRINGTON."

P. S. Are you an *Antisaccharite*?—I am resolved never to eat no more sugar not I, as I says to my wife, that is mind me till it *grows* cheaper.

MY GOOD FRIEND AND COUNTRYMAN,

Rest assured, that I rejoice you are now the *principal figure* in the *Academic group*—though I may not be so *brilliant* in

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my

my colouring, I have as much *truth of expression* as those who flatter more.—In any measure that may contribute to your dignity, or your advantage, you will always find me ready to *subscribe* my name. I have altered the *design* of the *Last Day*, and changed the Lawyers into Demons, and the Penitent Wenches to Angels. I have placed WILL TELL and TOM PAINE by the Redeemer, and suspended MUN BURKE between Heaven and Hell.—Pray, BEN, do you know if the Athenian Ladies wore smocks? My sister Patty improves exceedingly; she dead coloured four infants last week, and has managed another battle most delightfully. I have found a brighter varnish than was ever known to REYNOLDS: it supercedes the *Copel* and *Gum Mastic*: I procured the secret by bribing Lady A—ch—r's *femme de chambre* to scrape her mistress's cheek while she slept after the fatigues of *pharo*. By the bye I expect all the world to see me, for I have discovered a *new lake*.

Knarves Acre,
April 1, 1792. }

Your's, &c.

I. S. COPLEY.

P. S. All the Artists *is* praising Mr. SHEE's portrait of ANTHONY PASQUIN; I don't like that fellow, he is too fond of *readycule* for me.

Here the Reverend DOCTOR PETERS entered in his own proper and dignified person; he incontinently ascended the table, and gave us an appropriate sermon, which is assuredly valuable for its brevity, if not for its sentiment: he adopted as a text the words of honest *Paul*.

“ *Faith, Hope, and Charity*, but the greatest of these is *Charity*.”

“ *Faith*, said the smirking Priest, should be considered as a lady of Protean habits, because men dress her as fits their prejudices; the Catholic decks her in rich satin, the Lutheran in bombazeen, the Calvinist in dowlafs of fourteen pence a yard, the Methodist in sackcloth, the Socinian in a Polonese, and the Unitarian enjoys her without any. But the truth is, that *Faith* is incomprehensible, and consequently cannot be depicted. As to *Hope*, she is an *ignis fatuus* of the feminine gender, and is the only personage I ever knew who may be said to have the complete powers of ubiquity; she would make an excellent wife for a Prime Minister; she could be in all *places* at once, without hinderance of business. As for *Charity*, she may be compared to the New River Head, as she supplies a whole parish with her particular

cular bounties: this lady should be painted with one eye, as more claimants succeed on her blind side than the other. If you were to group the gentlewomen you should place *Charity* in the foreground, wiping her eyes with a benefit ticket; *Hope* playing at blind man's buff with *Folly*, and *Faith* should be sleeping in the clouds. There is the whole duty of a painter in a nutshell; the Diocesan could not tell you more. So now wash your faces, pay your debts, live cleanly, and your temporal affairs will glide merrily. So the peace of &c. &c." This wholesome admonition concluded with a sonorous Amen, and the Doctor leaped from his eminence and fell back into the ranks as usual.

When this piebald son of Theology had descended from his temporary tribune, the convocation broke up, and the whole party filed off upon their different avocations;—but TRUTH and BRITANNIA remaining, I slipped behind the chair, and overheard TRUTH thus delineate the Portraits of all the

ROYAL ACADEMICIANS

AND ASSOCIATES,

which had belonged to the Institution since its establishment. She prefaced her observations to BRITANNIA by declaring, that *her* remarks would be very unacceptable to the Professors, as they all thought themselves equal to *Raffaëlle*, and each believed himself superior to his competitor! She began with

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

That elegant flatterer of humanity on canvass (quoth she) was born at Plympton, in Devonshire, on July 16, 1723, where his father, depressed with a numerous family, prayed and starved as one of those subordinate ecclesiastics, whose state is a reproach to the indolent fat Prelates of this credulous island, who gorge on the luxuries of nature, and cast their offals indignantly to the patient and laborious curate.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS became a pupil to Mr. HUDSON in 1742; and it is said that the tinder of his youthful ambition caught fire when only fifteen years of age, from perusing *Richardson's* Theory of Painting: it is not unnecessary to add that Mr. HUDSON, (though an Artist of no consideration himself,) produced a REYNOLDS, a MORTIMER, and a WRIGHT, who formed a matchless triumvirate in their day.

'Ere the wing of his fancy was in full feather, it was his good fortune to be protected by the late Lord KEPPEL, under

der whose auspices he visited Italy, and by an incessant and well directed study, acquired, as he contemplated the best works of the best Masters, that grace of thinking to which he was principally indebted for his limitless reputation as a Portrait Painter; though I never subscribed to his merits to that extent which his companions and his panegyrists demanded. He swallowed potations of vile adulation even to sickening; but as they were administered by the unskilful, they must have worked to the relaxation, and not to the strengthening of his judgment.

In this emporium of the Arts he studied with industry and success, making the graces of the divine RAFAELLE, and the majesty of MICHAEL ANGELO, his particular sources of acquirement. He continued visiting the *Roman* and *Venetian* schools for two years, when he returned to his native country, with a mind capitably embellished and enriched, by the examples of the most approved Masters of Antiquity.

In 1769, when the King founded the National Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, under the title of The Royal Academy of Arts, he appointed Mr. REYNOLDS President, and I presume, in the hope of dignifying him, made him a Knight. At the opening of this Academy, January the 2d, in the same year, he delivered the first of those discourses on Painting, which he annually continued afterwards, and which were supposed to have been previously illuminated by the pens of SAMUEL JOHNSON and EDMUND BURKE. The principle which is chiefly inculcated in these essays is erroneous, as they tend to maintain an idea that a Disciple in Painting can do as well without genius as with it: but as every writer upon the Arts, in every language, had antecedently thought otherwise, perhaps the President believed that it was more advantageous to his fame to be singularly fallacious than customarily instructive.

The first Portrait by which he got celebrity on his return, was a whole length of his Naval Patron. This effort procured him a distinguished reputation, and he was then considered as the first and most fashionable Portrait Painter of the day—the brave and the beautiful, the old and the young, equally crowded to be pourtrayed on his canvases, and receive from his magic pencil a certain portion of extraneous grace, that was more dear to admiration than truth.

There certainly exists a disposition in our modern Artists to make the portraiture independent of the person represented,

ed, and for this disposition we are indebted to the labours of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS—not that I wish to convey any odium to his memory, but merely to prove to the rising race of Artists, how ruinous it is to make hazardous attempts to which the capacity is not competent, when the only excuse that can be brought forward in justification of the error, is, that the practice originated with a man whose genius and talents elevated him above common competition.

The greater part of conspicuous individuals have busy friends, whose wild exertions and unqualified encomiums rather injure than assist their reputation. Of this class of persons Sir JOSHUA had more than his share—it was their practice to feed him with an idea, that he was as much qualified to paint History as Portrait; and as men of genius, of all ages, have been more pleased to be lauded for what they could not do, than for what they could, we should not be amazed that he suffered himself to be flattered into an idea, that his ability was unrestricted. The late DAVID GARRICK was never so happy as when praised for his acting in *Othello*, which was contemptible; and MILTON smiled with transport when his weak rhapsody, called *Paradise Regained*, was preferred, in point of energy of thought, to his Heroic Poem on the *Fall of Man*.

The largest composition of Portraits that Sir JOSHUA ever painted, is the Family Piece of the most illustrious and serene House of Marlborough, now hung in the Gallery of that massy incumbrance of the earth called Blenheim.

The principal Historical Pictures which he has produced, are, *Hope Nursing Love—Venus Chastising Cupid for having learned Arithmetic—the Story of Count Hugolino and his Sons from Dante—a Gipsy Telling Fortunes—an Infant Jupiter—the Calling of Samuel—the Death of Dido—the Nativity—the Four Cardinal Virtues, with Faith, Hope, and Charity, for the New Chapel College, Oxford—and the Young Hercules strangling the Serpents, for the Imperial CATHERINE.*

The Pictures of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS must be taken in the whole, to preserve his reputation; as if you attempt to disjoin them, the component parts are not of equal value: this is a compliment to his genius in respect to composition and effect, but none when regarding his obligations to Truth; as the ramifications of whatever is true, will operate like the atoms of beautiful Nature, and be highly valuable as a component part, though dismembered from the common origin. Much has been urged as to the superior information
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of his mind, but I do not think that the presumed information has tended to the aggrandizement of his reputation ; as he almost unremittingly confined himself to the vile drudgery of portrait painting, and left the path of sublimity, where high science is required, to be trodden by those, whose intellects were unequal to the ulterior point of their desires. I never seriously contemplated a portraiture by this Artist, but I retired with sorrow from the rumination, as my restricted knowledge convinced me, that his elegance of imagination had only tended to the destruction of just thought and unequivocal truth : he employed his rare talents to make a *succedaneum* for rigorous labour, and has in consequence left a memorial of mental grace, but none of judicious application. He has erected a silken standard of fallacy, to which all the idle and the insufficient resort, who are equally avaricious, but not equally gifted ; or in plainer language, who sedulously adopt the *flap* and *dash* of his professional cunning, in preference to the love of nature and eternal fame. The illiberal attack upon his reputation by the late Mr. HONE, by no means reduced his importance with that fashionable herd, who administer encouragement in proportion as their deformities are reduced, and their vanities gratified ; he continued to make the tall short and the short tall as the wishes of the person pourtraying wavered, and very laudably as a man of the world, though not very honorably as an Artist, made his acquired powers obedient to the suggestions of those, who could reward him munificently, though they were denied the privilege to exalt his name. To his male fitters he was tolerably accurate, but with the ladies he was a most unlicensed flatterer ; and according to the evidence of his valued canvases, it was of little significance to observation whether the Omnipotent had made a Grace or a *Trulla*, as he uniformly arrayed each with the dignity of the Queen of Heaven and the fascinating smiles of Hebe.

The deceased Knight knew that the KING was never well affected towards him as an Artist ; and, notwithstanding he filled the Chair at Somerset-Place with unusual dignity and knowledge, yet he was not fortunate enough to conciliate the protection of his Sovereign, who on all occasions, not immediately connected with the Presidency of the Institution, gave a marked preference to Mr. WEST. This egregious predilection in the Royal Patron wounded the too exquisite sensibility of the Chief of British Limners.

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It is supposed that the King's disregard for Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS originated from the following event:—Shortly after the last Coronation, a Nobleman came from the King to the Artist, to know if he could make a drawing of the Procession, in imitation of *Vandyke's* design of a similar ceremony, for Charles the First: Sir JOSHUA replied, that he was not *fond* of making drawings, but he would make a sketch in oil; but previous to the undertaking he wished to be assured of an adequate reward, which he calculated at One Thousand Guineas. The Nobleman assured him of the indelicacy of speaking to the King upon such a subject, but consented to do it at the particular request of Sir JOSHUA; and the issue was, that the King felt himself so offended at the idea, that he relinquished the business altogether, and treated the Painter ever after with the most mortifying coldness—this occurrence paved the way for the introduction of RAMSEY at St. James's. The Procession, by *Vandyke*, was etched in *aquatinta*, by COOPER.

The posthumous fame of this valued man is more dependent on the *Prints* copied from his Pictures, than on the original exertion; the evanescent properties of which, must too soon reduce them to nothingness. In the commencement of Sir JOSHUA's professional ambition, he appears to have imbibed an ungovernable and unprofitable desire to be singular, in what Artists call the *tone of colour*; and as this could not be effected by the ordinary methods, he resorted to the laboratory, and prepared varnishes, as substitutes for oil, and appeared to forget they were perishable, while their gaudy hues drew forth applause from gaping *Folly*!

There are various mezzotinto copies from his designs, by M'ARDELL, HOUSTON, WATSON, and FISHER, which have obtained an high character for him on the Continent, inasmuch as they have exhibited the graces of his composition, without his coarsenesses, and have not unfrequently softened and amended the drawing of his extremities; yet Sir JOSHUA was so ungenerous as to require those graphic Artists to give him from fifty to one hundred proof copies of his Pictures, though the effort of the Engraver tended to give him additional celebrity, and make his Pictures more valuable.

The eulogists of this respectable man have affirmed, that he would have shone with as bright a lustre in any other liberal art as he did in Painting; but to this opinion I will not indiscriminately subscribe, although I think he was uncommonly gifted; my conviction is, that Nature designed

him to be eminent as a Portrait Painter, but denied him the power to be eminent in any other path. His anniversary discourses to the Students, display a knowledge of literary composition, and much well-applied theory.

LORD ORFORD, in the advertisement to his *Anecdotes of Painting*, takes occasion to mention the extraordinary merits of Sir JOSHUA—"The Prints after the works of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS," says this writer, "have spread his fame to Italy, where they have not at present a single Painter who can pretend to rival an imagination so fertile, that the attitudes of his Portraits are as various as those of History. In what age were paternal despair, and the horrors of death, pronounced with more expressive accents than in his Picture of Count HUGOLINO? When were infantine loveliness, or embryo-passions, touched with sweeter truth than in his Portraits of Miss PRICE, and the baby *Jupiter*?"

Sir JOSHUA possessed an equanimity of disposition rarely to be met in persons whose pursuit is universal renown, and who are attended and surrounded in their perilous journey by jealous competition. He was not annoyed by that fluctuation of idea and inconstancy of temper which prevents many, with similar desires, from resolving upon any particular plan, and disposes them to change it, even after they have made their election. This is a species of demi-lunacy which is too often attendant upon those whose peculiar faculties enable them to be creative. He had few of those eccentric bursts of action, those fiery impetuosities which characterise genius; he was mild in his manners, and persuasive in his argument; and if he felt the pangs of ungenerous envy, he had the address to keep the vile emotion disguised. This gentlemanlike policy was capitally advantageous to him, as the head of so incongruous and irritable a body as the *Royal Academicians*. Considering all the advantages deriveable from hypocrisy, I am not astonished that deception has so many votaries.

So variably humiliating is common opinion, that in the same year that he received 500 guineas from Messrs. BOND, for his *Death of Cardinal Beaufort*, his fine portrait of *Nelly O'Brien* was sold for 3 guineas, by public auction, at CHRISTIE'S, in Pall Mall.

There was a favourite thesis which Sir JOSHUA almost eternally enforced to the Students, which I think was injudicious and unfounded; namely, that unremitting industry was equivalent in its benefits to the happiest toils of ingenuity.

ity. If this position is not false, I am not properly intimate with the organization of human nature.

He has been very detrimental to the English school, by introducing a splashing, dashing method, that cannot be defended by any argument, or established upon any just criterion. His lights and shadows were generally arbitrary and independent of nature and the situation of the reflected objects: in some instances this liberty may be allowed, but he was too systematic in the error.

The semblance of his infantine figures were too immediate. His classic mind was directed to portraiture, and his genius was not equal to the sublime of history. He had more imagination than mechanism, and less truth than more humble men. He was the worst example for a Disciple, that ever presided in an academy of design: he seduced them to a viciousness of manner by his own efforts, as a plausible bawd attracts an innocent girl; it is all an appearance of what is beautiful and proper, but nothing that really is so. His best exertions were one continued attempt to represent what he imagined should be, and not what was: by this it should be understood, that he was superficially elegant, and not fundamentally accurate.

His introduction of that *varno-mania*, which pollutes the labours of almost all our Artists, who have been accustomed to look up to him as an unerring example, cannot be too seriously regretted by those who think permanency necessary at the completion of a Picture.—In vain would the lovers of *Virtu* now look for the charming *gusto* in colouring, which is so exquisitely palpable in the works of a GUIDO and a TITIAN, had those eminent men practised such unprofitable sophistication;—nor on contemplating their *Fruit Pieces* would the Poet have exclaimed,

“So glow’d the Grape, so perfect the deceit,
My hand reach’d forward, ere I found the cheat.”

An elegant writer, under the signature of Sir THOMAS FITZOSBORNE, has declared, in his letters, (which are written, in my weak opinion, in a more pure style than any others in our language,) “that the Graces, after wandering to find a home, settled in the mind of Mr. ADDISON.” I think such a compliment would be equally, if not more applicable to Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS; for all he said or did, was wholly unmingled with any of those inelegancies which frequently stain the beauty of grand exertions. This bright influence of his imagination sometimes impelled

him to conquer truth, when he delineated mean personages—thus Mr. BARTOLOZZI's chaste eye makes it extremely difficult for him to copy the lineal traces of deformity.

There was a polish in the exterior of Sir JOSHUA, illustrative of the Gentleman and the Scholar; he was a critic in the classics, and knew XENOPHON and GROTIUS, as well as DU FRESNOY; he practised the minute elegances with success, and though a deaf companion, was never troublesome!—The best reason that can be assigned for his having a more enlarged notion of grace and greatness than his contemporaries, was, that he had more information. A vulgar man may acquire what is termed cleverness, but cannot attain greatness—that can only be embraced by him whose understanding has been decorated by the Sciences.

Speaking conclusively, Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS was as injurious to the true principles of painting as a fine prostitute to the establishment of morals; they are equally glaring, gaudy, and attractive in their manners, but neither are entitled to our admiration, when it is connected with reflection; and admiration in such cases is but another phrase for folly. He has introduced a baneful slovenliness of manner, among our servile and imitative Artists, for which his own acknowledged grace of thinking could not compensate, in his best labours; much less in the labours of those who have all his ambition with not half of his worldly subtlety, and all his failings with not half of his imposing knowledge.

Mr. WEST.

Mr. BENJAMIN WEST is a native of Philadelphia in the Province of Pennsylvania, in North America; where his father, who was an Englishman and a Quaker, kept a coopers shop. Mr. WEST was apprenticed to an apothecary in that City, where his delineating propensities were originally manifested by his drawing and painting the labels for the drawers of the pharmacopolist.

He was sent to Italy, under the patronage of the PENN^l. family, in 1763, and from thence to England; a few years after his father arrived in this country, accompanied by the lady who is now Mrs. WEST. There are two points in the early history of this gentleman which deserve a record: he generously married the first object of his love without a dowry, after a long separation, which did not shake his attach-

attachment, though situated in the emporium of vice and irregularity; and he dutifully maintained his aged parent at Reading, when his circumstances were far less brilliant than they are now.

In 1765 he produced two historical pictures, which bespoke an ability not common, though they involved a greater portion of labour than taste: the subjects were *Angelica* and *Medoro*, and *Cymon* and *Iphigenia*. During the latter years of his existence he has been employed by the King to decorate the apartments of Windsor Castle; and I hope, in this instance at least, that the munificence of the Sovereign is equal to the comprehension and dignity of regal patronage.

The most excellent and prominent composition he ever made is the *Death of General Wolfe*: it was produced at a time when the national pulse of gratitude had not ceased to vibrate; but, in my opinion, the choice of subject was more advantageous to Mr. WEST than the execution. He has been certainly indebted to *Vandyke* and *Lorenzo de Bicci*,* for the more impressive attitudes in this work; and his address is, with me, more decided than his genius.

It is worthy of remark, that this was the first Historical Print, engraved by a British Artist, which has been in great request upon the Continent, and which has indeed proved that we are capable of being excellent in that very difficult province. By some it may be argued that this declaration tends to cast a collateral stigma upon the talents of Mr. STRANGE; for he has had his admirers, and even some among them were not entirely destitute of judgment: but of him I shall speak more fully, when his merits are more immediately under consideration. Mr. WEST has candidly declared in public, that he borrowed the principal figure in the composition from *Vandyke's* famous picture of *date obolum Belisario*. It is my idea that the grouping of this subject is not entitled to such indiscriminate praise as has been bestowed upon it: but the theme was so popular that it laid the foundation of a celebrity for the performance, before the matter was exhibited. Every lover of his country surveyed with eagerness what operated to perpetuate the memory of their gallant countryman, and in the moments of high admiration

* Lorenzo di Bicci, born at Florence, in 1400, and died in 1460, a disciple of Spinello Aretino. This Artist has been supposed to be one of those, who first cleared away the briars from that path in which the great masters have since trodden with so much ease to themselves, and benefit to the enlightened Schools of design in Europe!

admiration and retrospective gratitude, the judgment permitted those encomiums to pass muster, which on subjects less interesting would have been coolly questioned.

To effect his singular purposes, the Artist has made a solecism in nature, and the elements contradictory. The same gale that blows the ensign to the right, is arbitrarily contrived to blow the hair of the lamenting grenadier in the foreground to the left. Though we have heard of strange circumstances co-operating with important events in earlier times, our faith is now so restricted as to doubt of the order of things being reversed, in accordance with the hopes or convulsions of the human mind.

At the distribution of the prizes on the 10th instant,* I heard Mr. West deliver an idea, in the course of his lecture, which somewhat astonished me: he affirmed, that when he was at Rome, he was attended by several English persons of distinction, and some Romans, to view the fine monuments of art in that decaying seat of empire; and their principal motive in attending him was, to see what effect some of those divine productions of the Ancients would have upon an American. They first placed him in a point of view, where, by throwing open a door, he might suddenly behold the Apollo Belvidere; at this instant all their eyes were concentrated upon his visage, who instantaneously exclaimed, "How like a young Mohawk?"—This operated, at first, like a sort of prophanation, to compare the god of song with a savage; but, as Mr. West affirmed, he qualified by degrees the apparent contrast, and at length induced them to acknowledge, that his emotions were consistent with nature and truth, though they at first appeared so contradictory

* At the last Anniversary of the Institution of the Royal Academy, a General Assembly was held, when the following Premiums were given, viz. A Gold Medal to Mr. J. Bacon, jun. for a Bas Relief; the subject from Milton's Paradise lost. A Silver Medal to Mr. A. Cardon, Mr. J. J. Masquerier, Mr. S. F. Rigaud, and Mr. G. A. Keman, for drawings of Academy Figures. A Silver Medal to Mr. A. Goblet, for a Model of an Academy Figure, and also to Mr. S. Aston, and Mr. A. Pool Moor, for Drawings in Architecture, Lord Belborough's House, at Rochampton, done from actual measurement.

After which the President gave a Discourse.

The General Assembly then proceeded to the Election of Officers for the ensuing year, and B. West, Esq. was re-elected President. Sir F. Bourgeois, P. J. De Louthembourg, R. Smirke, J. Zoffani, J. Farrington, G. Dance, W. Tyler, and J. Bacon, Esq. Council. J. Bacon, T. Banks, W. Hamilton, R. Smirke, J. Barry, J. Northcote, F. Wheatley, H. Fuseli, and J. F. Rigaud, Esqrs. Visitors.

tradictory and absurd.—These bold, though unqualified assertions, had a wonderful effect upon the auditors; their celestial prejudices were abruptly effaced from their minds; the luminous powers of the god were nearly extinguished by his *extraordinary* powers of rhetoric, and more than half of the dull congress around him retired with a conviction that the savage was the better example and the finer gentleman. They vaunt of the oral abilities of Demosthenes; but if ever Demosthenes did more than this, I will pledge my happiness for a brass farthing!

Perhaps this voluntary confession will operate as the best apology for his otherwise irreconcilable Portraits of the Philosophers and Kings of the antique and modern ages!

Mr. WEST deserves much commendation for his boldly undertaking to groupe an historical fact in modern habits, an attempt which originated with him in this Country: and though I do not frequently approve of his paintings in the *tout ensemble*, he has arranged many of his best pieces in a style that has excited the encomiums of the most reputable Artists of foreign schools, particularly his *Regulus*. Mr. WEST conceives his subjects more happily than he executes them: had he in his earlier habits studied the gaiety and magic lightness of *Paul Veronese*, who imitated and regarded nature with the eyes of *Titian*, he would have lost insensibly that dulness of tone, and heaviness of idea, which are such material drawbacks on his professional importance.

I have seen but few portraits by this gentleman, and those few were not honorable to his capacity; his whole lengths of Mr. DRUMMOND, and his *apotheosis* of Prince Octavius, were equally hard and uncongenial with the blended tints of nature: the subject of the latter might have been dispensed with in a liberal age like this, when the palpable ærial voyages of the spirit are not only questioned but derided. It is ludicrous to notice an *aristocratic* Angel bringing his Royal brother to a half-way house for congratulation.

Mr. WEST, like *Parmegian*, and *Polidore*, is in more request on paper than canvass; some of his sketches breathe a noble air, which seems to forsake him when he embarks in colouring. I prefer the arrangement of his objects in *La Hogue* to those in his *General Wolfe*, though the performance was never so popular. To try the effect of the grouping, I put my hand over the figure of *Wolfe*, when the encircling personages gave me the idea of spectators at a cock-fight.

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In his embodying the spectacle of *La Hogue* he has been evidently indebted to the boat scene in the *Idle Apprentice*, and the *Bedlam Scene* by HOGARTH.

The fine figures of the ancients are admirably calculated to regulate, by their graceful soberness, those impetuous springs of the imagination which are visible in the earliest productions of a Painter of innate grandeur of mind: they operate, like so many tacit axioms from the elders, to call them in the heighday of the curvettings of genius, to the plain and beautiful institutes of thought. The models of the Greek sculptors must be studied, not lineally copied; as when that is evidently the case, and we can recognise the statue on canvass, we feel for the paucity of mind in that Painter who makes so impolitic a use of those fine objects of study. Mr. HAMILTON, of Rome, is frequently unpardonable in such violations of propriety, and Mr. WEST, in his picture of *Pylades and Orestes*, has presented us only with the *Antinous* in two points of view. The great Masters of the Continental schools of design had as high an idea of their grace and greatness as we can have, but they scorned to inmix them with their own original exertions in so unqualified a degree.

I have heard various reasons assigned for the polite arts not being cultivated here with the same success as they have been in Italy, but none have appeared to me as satisfactory: some have founded their arguments on the want of taste in our Nobility, others on the indolence and inaptitude of our Students, but more upon the ungenial tendencies of our climate:* yet all these premises are partly, if not altogether wrong: the great and melancholy cause of their failure is, in my opinion, the dearness of the articles necessary for the eager purposes of subsistence; which are here, contrasted with other nations, oppressively enormous; and the disciple is obliged to dedicate the larger part of his time to some debasing attempt, by which he may acquire food: these indispensable measures not only retard his improvement, but in reality vulgarise his mind. A Graduate, who should be continually walking round the circle of the sciences, would feel himself very often discomfited, if he was compelled by the cold and iron finger of necessity to ramble half his hours in the common and polluted paths of life, where the ignorant,

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* The *Abbé Du Bos*, in his reflections upon this head, has been boldly erroneous and illiberal: this fallaciousness of idea springs from prejudice, not thought.

the presuming, and the idle, are incessantly shoving the virtuous and the meritorious from their stools, and questioning and abusing the utility of those talents they do not possess.

I do not mean to be uncivil to the President, but I confess, that his *best* labours in general appear to me but as the happiest efforts of a *Sign Painter* of the first order: they are so unjustly ordered that if they are clean they are coarse, and if they are bold they are oppressive. He assuredly possesses but few, if any of those rare qualifications which refine the mind to a due sense of perception, in regarding nature, for the purpose of selecting her delicate and more subtle beauties. He draws, in some instances, correctly, but the contour of his figures is too decided and ropy; they furnish the idea of an object edged with twist. His draperies are too blanketty; and where he clothes a lady in white, it seems as if he had copied the flowings from a marble original, and not the texture of a loom. When the fancy of an Artist is corrupted in this way he can with difficulty vary the qualities of his draperies, even in cases where the cunning and abrupt forms of the folds should irresistibly declare the object to be satin, silk, velvet, or any other splendid habiliment. Had Mr. WEST only sketched, and never painted, his reputation would have been less doubted, as he appears to me to have a more imperfect idea of harmony than any other living Artist of similar expectations and credit. The loveliness of truth, in whatever way or shape it is represented, is uniformly powerful and fascinating; in some situations she is more impervious than in others, but the more difficulty the development is attended with, the more honor accrues to the manifestation,

Mr. LOUTHERBOURG.

J. P. DE LOUTHERBOURG is a native of *Straßbourg*, in *Alsace*, where his father was an Engraver. This gentleman has received a miscellaneous education; he studied at Paris under *Boucher*, *Vanlo*, and *Cassanovo*, but formed his manner upon the principles of the last. It is curious (if I may be allowed the figure), to observe the genealogy of *manner* among Artists: *Detricci* begat *Cassanovo*; *Cassanovo* begat *Loutherbourg*, and *Loutherbourg* begat *Sir Francis Bourgeois*, and *Bourgeois*, it is possible, may engender something more equivocal than himself! But thus it is in the Drama:

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Garrick

Garrick created Henderson, who created Harley, who the Gods may permit to create something even less meritorious.

O imitatores servum pecus !

I have thought that the most undeniable proof of our ascribed degeneracy, is manifested in the present want of honorable ambition. Modern men are more willing to be artful than to be noble, and vainly believe that to steal is as dignifiable as to study ; but these are fourberies too indicative of our profligacy and our indolence. Our greatest endeavour is to suppress the blushes which honest shame would infuse ; and he who is most impassioned, seems most happy. Thus we perpetrate, and sicken and die,

“ While the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us.”

When Mr. DE LOUTHERBOURG quitted Paris he came to London, and resided several months unnoticed, until the penetrating eye of GARRICK found out his merits—he engaged him at a salary of 500l. per annum, to superintend the Scenery of Old Drury-Lane Theatre. He was the improver of Stage Scenery and its effects, as before his time it was all one dead flat ; but by introducing bits as cottages, and broken stiles before that flat, he gave the whole a stronger resemblance of nature. Mr. SHERIDAN for some time continued him at the salary Mr. GARRICK gave, but on attempting to bring it down to less than half, Mr. LOUTHERBOURG, with becoming spirit, resisted the proposal, and made a new species of entertainment for the Town, called an *Eidophusikon* ; a name it justly deserved, as with the assistance of reflecting transparent gauzes, highly illuminated, it rendered the images of Nature in such an eminent order, as to induce Mr. GAINSBOROUGH to be constant in his visits to that extraordinary and meritorious spectacle ; and he has been heard to declare, that he never went away without receiving instruction as well as amusement, from the wonderful ability which Mr. LOUTHERBOURG displayed. The management of the lights and machinery were intrusted to some ingenious Artists who assisted him. This brilliant exhibition was sold by the inventor, but those who have not seen it when under his immediate conduct, can have but an imperfect idea of its amazing excellence.

Perhaps no man was ever blest with the powers of memory in a higher degree than Mr. LOUTHERBOURG ; he can make a drawing of an object he had seen several days previous

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to the exertion, with wonderful adroitness and skill. This is a singular gift, which should be rendered more serviceable to his fame and his interest than as he orders it : indeed I am not certain but by his too great reliance on such uncommon powers that they operate to his disadvantage, by feeding him with a vain inclination to despise those aids, which arise from a repeated contemplation of objects, and without which no man can design with precision, however eminently he may be endowed. If the restless vanities of our nature are not overpowered by a spirit of ambition, we cannot exercise our functions with any great advantage, either to ourselves or to society. We should uniformly, (in an honorable sense,) endeavour to become what we are not, rather than repose contentedly with those acquired talents, which it is the restricted lot of the most perfect among us to enjoy. I wish I had the power to compel this ingenious gentleman to the full exercise of his comprehensive ability.

I have seen some etchings, by this Master, which prove that he can occasionally handle the needle with address : the subjects were apparently satiric figures, partaking more of *caricatura* than character ; they prove to a critical eye, how very difficult it is to overcome original prejudices, for though they are all meant as representatives of British eccentricity, which is, in all its ramifications, a sort of humour peculiar to Britain, yet in these instances, has the early education of the Artist so predominated over truth, that they are all creatures of a doubtful origin, exhibiting at once, (like SAM FOOTE's licentious *Buck*,) animals of English growth habited in Parisian drapery !

There is a destructive desire in many persons, emulous of fame, to appear in a point of view uncongenial with their natural or acquired talents : I have known some rendered very grotesque and ridiculous, by such obstinate efforts to appear what they cannot be. From this polluted source have arisen imperfect landscapes by Mr. WEST, who has much merit as an historical painter, and imperfect historical pieces by Mr. LOUTHERBOURG, who has much merit as a landscape painter !—I have been informed that he took uncommon pains with his last performance of *The Siege of Valenciennes* ; it is even averred that he meant it as a *chef d'œuvre* ; yet, (I think) it presents nothing that is altogether excellent in the art, though it manifests in the performer a considerable portion of genius. This subject is now under

the hands of the engraver, Mr. VALENTINE GREEN ; and I lament that when it is probably given to the world, all those laudable and proud emotions which excited the subscribers, in the warm glow of national honor, to support the undertaking, will be deadened by the painful recollection, that the victory it celebrates is now absorbed in a consequent misfortune.

There is a portion of the decalogue which enjoins us not to make any image to adore, which is the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth : and to do them justice, if a rigid observance of this divine institute is exemplary, there were never a set of more austere Christians than the Artists of this nation, as of all their productions not one in a hundred are similar to the honest issue of nature :—to particularize Mr. LOUTHERBOURG on this point might be deemed invidious, as the majority of his brethren are equally fallible : but until brickdust fore-grounds, red fields, brass trees, and a copper horizon, are consonant with the association of palpable objects, I shall persist in believing that our modern landscape painters, like our modern dramatists, are more indebted to the presentments of a distracted brain, than any existing objects that ever were, are, or ever will be.

There was a period when Mr. LOUTHERBOURG was apparently bewitched from himself, when the phantasies of an unsettled mind drove him upon the trial of experiments, equally futile and unprofitable ; when the *auri sacra fames* made him immure himself from the world, to seek the philosopher's stone ; he pondered, he floundered, and he was approaching fast to the threshold of common pity, cadaverous, but not rich, when the good sense of a relative saved him from local perdition ; she burst upon him during his nocturnal studies, when he was keenly watching the deceiving progress of transmutation, in company with a *Charlatan*, from the Lower Rhine : the reddening fair caught them in the raging of the enchantment ; when they were calcining *Venus* with the butter of the daughter of *Luna*, and fixing *Luna* herself into *Sol*—she broke his crucible to shivers, enfranchised the simmering metal, extinguished his fires, and seizing the forceps, took his adust associate by the nose, and led him from the laboratory to the street, where the enraged lady broke his head with a urinal, and then dismissed him with a timely malediction. From this eccentricity he shortly wandered to another, originating
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from a wild benevolence of spirit:—this inventive gentleman dreamed that he was blest with a knowledge of the Panacea, Catholicon, or remedy for all diseases; he professed to be an adept in the art of healing, and was believed; his gates were crowded with the diseased of all degrees, and he imagined that he could eradicate their complicated maladies by the secret springs of sympathy; he ardently thought himself “eyes to the blind and feet to the lame;” he enforced his spells, but the end was not answerable to his hope; the cripple was unrelieved, and the internally afflicted were not grateful for his attention. The miserable inmates of the vicinity, rushed like a common torrent, from Putney, Brentford, Kew, and Noman’sland; the blind followed the whoopings of the lame, until they congregated on the terrace at Hammer Smith. There they manifested their wrath by a yell that would have staggered Cerberus; the Alsatian *Celfus* heard the curse with dread, he seized his telescope, and scudded to the garret to reconnoitre; the liberal Chymist, (who is amiable even in his errors,) leered upon the disappointed mob from the parapet of his mansion, and saw his most valued medicaments cast into a fœtid ditch: his *aqua bezoartica*, his *catharticum argentum*, his *calomelanos*, and his dear *pilulæ panchymagogæ*, were hurled amid the swine of the district, while he, like another Jeremiah, stunned even Heaven with his lamentations, as his big manly tears ran down the gutter to the silver Thames!

The ancients supposed there were seasons when their guardian angel slept, and left them a prey to the agents of sublunar misery: perhaps Mr. LOUTHERBOURG was thus circumstanced, and his fine genius held in the bondage of error, by a superhuman power.

SIR WILLIAM CHAMBERS.

Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS, Knight, R. A. is a native of Sweden. He commenced his career, as a supercargo, in a trading vessel, from Sweden to China, where he acquired by his merits and his industry, three thousand pounds. He studied the manners of that kingdom, and particularly their ideas of building and gardening with peculiar attention; from China he came to England, where he formed the resolution of going to Rome, and becoming an Architect: there he studied the works of the best Greek and Italian masters,

masters. From Italy he returned to London, where he had the good fortune to become an object of request in the eyes of the King.

It is the first boast of this accomplished Chevalier, that he has strutted in the paths of literature; his most valued performance, was a defence of oriental gardening, which, though written with much skill and infinite attention, did not obtain the preference it deserved, as unluckily it was not generally *understood*!

At the formation of the Royal Academy, this inimitable gentleman was appointed treasurer, and no agency was ever conducted with more disinterestedness, liberality, and exceeding caution. He succeeded the late Mr. ROBINSON, as Secretary to the Board of Works in 1775, at the particular recommendation of his royal master; and furnished, what are termed, the decorations of Kew Gardens, for the PRINCESS DOWAGER of WALES. He has produced several pupils of considerable merit, among whom Mr. GANDON, who constructed the new Custom House in Dublin, may be arranged as the most perfect.

It is reported, that the most magnificent work which Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS ever produced, is *Somerset Place*, which has been trumpeted loudly, as involving the best parts of the Oltromantane schools, with the most approved style of antiquity; how adroitly this wedding of contradictions has been effected, I shall proceed to examine.

SOMERSET PLACE.

The ancient palace, which was so presumptuously brushed away, for this illegitimate structure, was the metropolitan retreat of the Duke of Somerset, uncle to Edward the Sixth; it is now the residence of a greater and more puissant man, HENRY DUNDAS.

The cunning projector of this undefineable mass, has been occasionally indebted to the pure designs which *Inigo Jones* intended as a continuation to Whitehall, but which were never carried into effect, as the calamities of the *first* CHARLES, tended to destroy that taste which he had introduced: these superb bits appear among the other parts of the pile, like elegant individuals in abasing company.

This surprising, stupendous, and extraordinary heap of stones, was called into order by the magic voice of that pine-apple of knighthood, Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS, at the command of the great and sapient Council of this Realm, in

1774. It occupies a space of 500 feet in depth, and 800 in width, and is altogether a most astonishing assemblage of contradictory objects. The entrance, or Atrium, is so unappropriate, that it looks like the narrow mouth of economy, through which we grope our passage to the vast stomach of national ruin. The arcade is borrowed from the *Strada della dora Grossa* at Turin.

At the termination of the vestibule, is a large bronze statue of the King, who seems placed there for no other purpose but to take cognizance of the exits and entrances of the clerks and watchmen, as if he kept a day-book to check their time. Beneath the nose of the Sovereign is a putrescent pool of stagnant rain-water; I presume this was meant by the questuory and accommodating Architect, as emblematic of the swinish democracy of the realm. I have no doubt but the effluvium from the green liquid, is more pestilential than that imputed by *Virgil* to the Lake *Averno*, which is reported to have killed all the birds that flew over it; but as few or none visit this vicinity, but *birds of prey*, the virtuous part of society are not much inclined to commiserate their delirium or their woe!—The whole of this monument offends my vision: it may be requisite for a Prime-Minister to be *bronzed*, but not a Monarch. There is another unfortunate allusion to Royalty; the entablatures of this vestibule are covered with cyphers, emblematic and appertaining to the King, Queen, and Prince of Wales. Surely no true subject can approve of annexing the characters of *cyphers* to such august personages! If there is any novelty or genius evident in this sportiveness of fancy, it is so thoroughly republican and indecent that it should be immediately effaced.

From what source of information (as Nature is entirely out of the question) the gentle knight has drawn his *Caryatides*, I know not. They are, generally speaking, piscatory monsters; more terrific and ungenial than any *Horace* deprecated, or that ever entered into the perturbed imagination of sleeping youth. The males have long flowing hair, with large crabs and lobsters creeping through their ragged locks: this is a very delightful thought, and perfectly original, as it conveys a lively idea of marine *pediculi*. The ladies have a peculiar sort of head-dress, made up of dead salmon, lampreys, sea-weed, and other aquatic rarities, like so many distracted mermaids. Some of the masks are so peculiarly conciliatory and smiling, that I think Earl CAM-

SEN should have borrowed one on his recent embassy to Ireland.—This measure could not be reasonably resisted, as they might all be removed without any injury to the basement.

That part of this inconsistent, lapidifick accumulation, which is appropriated to the *Polite Arts*, is admitted to be unexceptionable: the principal Room dedicated to the purposes of lectureship and the annual exhibition, cannot be approached but by a spiral stair-case, as high as Jacob's ladder; which (luckily for the Lecturer and the Exhibitors) turns the heads of the visitors, before they can either hear or examine. In Sir **JOSHUA REYNOLDS's** Presidency, the floor gave way, and sunk many inches, when **BURKE**, and a few more of the *illuminati*, were eagerly listening to a theme they could not comprehend: the company shrieked, **BURKE** prayed, and the gods suspended the mischief. It is piteous that all these disasters had not occurred more recently, as then the erratic Swede might have imputed them to a partial shock from **BROTHERS's** predicted earthquake, and thus have covered his honor, by coming in for a slice of the alarming prophecy!

The names of the sculptors who were employed in the decoration of the exterior, are **CARLINI**, **WILTON**, **GERACCHI**, **NOLLEKENS**, and **BACON**. I have chronicled them as sculptors, not statuaries, as neither appear to have cut a figure in this business.

On the top of the *Corps de Logis*, or central part of this heterogenous association of stones, we see a dirty black lump, which he calls a dome, and which is apparently stolen from the worst embellishments of that worst of architects, Sir **JOHN VANBRUGH**. It furnishes me with no other idea but an inverted punch-bowl, and peradventure might be intended by Sir **WILLIAM** as a durable symbol of sobriety, to operate upon the senses of the Clerks, to keep them from tipping in the hours of duty.

It appears to me, from consequences, that any thing can make an *Architect*, as well as a *Taylor*! yet, a cock sparrow in his nest, would beat them all, if security is eminently essential to the continuance of the structure. This splendid Knight of Poland, in his eagerness to have his buildings replete with taste, forgot that it was expedient they should have strength also. The terrace of this magnificent jumble, which was so unfeelingly cut out of the muddy sides of the venerable Thames, was the pride of his heart; but, alas!

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as it is decreed that pride shall have a fall, it should not create surprize that the proud eminence, like *Burke's* slippery whigs, seceded from the parental pile, and fell ingloriously in the dirt ! The subterraneous apartments, it must be acknowledged, have every recommendation but *light*. It strikes me, that they must have been perverted, by accident or necessity, from the original design of Sir WILLIAM CHAMBERS, who assuredly built them in imitation of some *classic coal-holes* !—in these damp, black, and comfortless recesses, the clerks of the nation grope about like moles, immersed in Tartarean gloom, and *stamp, sign, examine, indite, doze, and swear*, as unconscious of the revolving sun, as so many miserable demons of romance, condemned to toil for ages in the centre. Methinks, I hear the Genius of the Isle of Portland mourn, for this misapplication and prostitution of its entrails !

The key-stones of the arches are wonderfully carved in alto-relievo, with colossal masks of the Ocean, and the rivers of Britain, among which the Thames looks peculiarly sulky, as not having forgot or forgave the irruptions made upon his filthy domains, by this saucy edifice. There was a tablet, with the Lord Mayor, and Court of Aldermen, in tears, upon the same occasion, but this was omitted.

Some of the ornaments are so obtrusive, that it is recommended to obliterate the ocean, and send the billing swans to the Maids of Honor ; the *Lares* to Buckingham House ; the cornucopias to the poor, and all the fish to Billingsgate.

In each corner of the quadrangular court, is a urinal of tripodical proportions, so happily and wonderfully contrived, as to form a charming *coup d'œil* for the female tenants of the establishment, as four persons may dextrously disemboque at each, and mingle their secrets and their secretions at the same period. What a glorious contrivance for the communication of ideas and the dispatch of business?—it was originally intended to introduce the FIVE ORDERS, in a fandango ; but the absurdity of the measure was timely exposed by Mr. BOSWELL, who proved to demonstration, that they had never been taught to dance.

This confederacy of alien attributes are like so many enemies compelled to elbow each other in a mob ; they seem to curse mutually in the moment of embracing, like so many cats ; it is a racemation, or cluster, of antipathies, made of recrementitious parts—an untimely exposition of

bruised and battered stones, torn from the bowels of the peaceful quarry—here are pillars and pilasters unconnected with order, chambers and avenues without usefulness, and men and women without genders.

As there is no sublunary perfection, it may be no dishonor to the architect, to note, that the following alterations have been suggested, and will be enforced: *viz.* to carve a lame Phœbus over the Coach Office; a Plutus with one eye over the Pay Office; a Sailor in stumps over the Navy Office; a Silenus in the suds over the door of the Treasurer of the Navy; a forestaller hung in chains over the Victualing Office, and an incrustated chamber-pot over the Hall for the Antiquarians.

At *Wilton Place*, formerly the seat of the DUKE of ARCYLL, but now of the felicitous Knight himself, he has exerted his astonishing ability in a peculiar manner, by erecting what he denominates a temple of Esculapius, as a left-handed compliment to Dr. WILLIS, to whose skill we are indebted for the restoration of the Sovereign. As Esculapius was but the journeyman to Hygeia, and did little more than carry her *spatula* and drugs, I presume to aver, that justice, as well as gallantry, should have impelled him to have given the Lady the preference. But this collateral criticism shall not induce me to pass over the extraordinary merit attached to this building, which is contrived with such subtle address, as to be equally applicable and acceptable to any god or goddess, as well as the medical old gentleman in question; but, perhaps, Sir WILLIAM may feel sensations, which justify such an extravagant tribute to the powers of the *mad doctor*; for, as the great bard has phrased it, “we know what we are, but we know not what we may be.”

Though it is palpable to me, that the Knight alluded to has been benighted in some of his professional endeavours, it remains with the wiser part of society to appreciate him with correctness, and I sincerely hope that truth will be established, although my penetration might suffer in the issue.

True architecture may be resolved into the following idea, *viz.* to connect *Strength* with *Beauty*, and make both conducive to *Utility*; but our builders disdain to be shackled with such antique obligations, while the liberal hand of national folly fattens them into a careless independence. LORD THURLOW slumbers as happily in his *Sugar-house*, at Knight's Hill, after the fatigue of telling money at
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the Exchequer, as Augustus did in his proud and noble pavilion. Such is the refined taste of the age of *George the Third*; glorious æra! And yet we have the audacity, during the commission of such absurdities, to prate of the Goths and Vandals with an unblushing scorn.

But it may be ungenerous to form a judgment of what architecture *is* by what it *was*. I shall forbear to enlarge upon the beauties of *Vitruvius*, *Mustius*, *Bruneleschi*, or the ascribed graces of the Tuscan school. This is a wonderful kingdom, and perhaps the buildings should be wonderful to square with the genius of the land. The *Gout des Nations* varies even more than the clime; hence arises an apology for the seeming errors of our architectural professors. The sleek and corpulent haberdasher regards his *Gazebo* as much as *Cicero* did his *Tusculum*, or *Pliny* his *Laurentum*; then who should wrangle upon the point of right in either dominion, when all the parties are equally happy? I will venture to declare, that *Callimachus* or *Palladio* never made a hundredth part so much by their practice as Mr. HOLLAND: and as nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand will be more profound in their obedience, and more sincere in their habits of respect, to the man of gold than the man of sublime merit, it naturally follows that he is the more reputable character who commands the most homage. The acquisition of knowledge is both troublesome and unproductive; and where is the man, with a sound mind, who would willingly embrace so much anxiety, when the events of each hour prove, that he is most successful who is most ignorant, and that he is most honored who is most successful?

MR. STODHART.

THOMAS STODHART, R. A. was born in Long-acre, Saint Martin's parish, London, in 1756. This artist was first apprenticed to a pattern-drawer, in Spital Fields. When Mr. Stodhart was emancipated from his indentures, his knowledge of the human figure was very restricted, but having a small annual income, and being naturally æconomical, he took the very laudable resolution of living within his income, and appropriating all his time to the study of the arts. The first time he burst upon the public notice, was by the designs which he so ably furnished for Mr. HARRISON's *Novelist's Magazine*; and as these designs were adequately engraved, it, fortunately for him, laid the foundation of a celebrity which has never been surpassed by
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any native of these realms. I have heard his *vignettes* and *taille douce* pieces much commended in Paris, where the artists highly value themselves on their address in this province of the arts, and not without reason, as *Gravelot*, *Eisin*, and *Picart*, have been unrivalled in their efforts by the rest of Europe. There is a littleness and nice attention to trifles visible in French paintings, which tallies admirably with such endeavours. The first historic picture in oil he exhibited, was the death of the gallant LORD ROBERT MANNERS, who was killed on board his own ship, the *Resolution*; he was encouraged to this effort by Mr. MACKLIN, of Fleet-street, of whom the artist speaks in terms of gratitude, for his generous and becoming conduct: but the picture which established his reputation, was an historical subject from *Mallet*. This performance was very commonly admired, and Mr. STODHART, from that moment, has continued ascending the acclivity of fame. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1791, and a Royal Academician in 1794.

This Gentleman is among the very few historical painters in this realm, who *appear* to believe, that the undertaking is more dependent upon thought than action; he gives his subject to the general eye with more precision than his competitors; and though, perhaps, he disdains the subordinate efforts of the art too much, and particularly what is understood by the word *handling*, yet is his production valuable, as he gives us, in the composition of a subject, what is consolatory to an inquiring spirit, although he refuses to bestow on his labours that correctness, which should be the ultimate desire of all who expect *universal approbation*.

Mr. STODHART is of that few, who make their movements independent of the lesser vanities of life. Every disciple should mingle as little as possible in the bustle of an agitated world; his deportment should be unalterably in the haunts of Peace, where he might contemplate serenely, and make his professional ability illustrate and develop the magic of his teeming conception. If the *animi pathemata* are not harmonized and attuned by the benign influence of truth, the powers of thought cannot have a due share of force, in the guidance of the genius to deeds of indisputed honor. When the lake is continually ruffled by the obstruction of gales more or less turbulent, it cannot reflect the received objects of vision with accuracy or beauty.

No. III.

Mr. LAWRENCE.

ADDISON has observed, that "censure is the tax which every man pays for being eminent." This tax, though always strenuously demanded, is, like most other taxes, not always cheerfully paid. In animadverting on the merits of the Royal Academicians in this detail, I have been reported by some as too partial, and by others as too severe. To sport a paradox, to be too partial is to be severe, as well as to be severe is to be partial: as few take the trouble to reprove errors but in those they regard:—the gardener removes with care every noxious weed that might impede the growth or spoil the brilliancy of his favourite flower, but those he does not value he resigns to the rude elements, to "waste their sweetness in the desert air."

I am told that some of the R. A's have felt themselves sorely hurt, and curvetted exceedingly at a little wholesome correction which has occasionally dropped from my pen; while others there are who have sensibly smiled, and freely owned that they are but men, and as public men, properly subject to the dominion of criticism. Notwithstanding my ascribed uncharitableness, I will repeat, after the Duke of Buckingham,

"'Tis great delight to laugh at some mens ways,
But a much greater to give merit praise."

Mr. or as he was then characterised, Master THOMAS LAWRENCE, began his studies at a period when other boys are at their syntax, and at the very early age of eight made some very promising attempts at portrait painting; at the age of nine he was capable, without any instruction, of copying some historical pictures in a style that indicated great genius, and gave the admiring world a composition of his own: the subject was the Denial of Christ by Peter. About this time he drew the portraits of Mr. WEST, the President, and Mr. HUMPHRIES, and finished both within the hour.

I will not use the hyperbolical falsehood which POPE applied to *Kneller*, in saying "he was by Heaven and not a Master taught;" though the compliment would be more dear to truth, as *Kneller* was the Scholar of *Frank Hals*, but young LAWRENCE, like EPICURUS of old, may claim the merit of being self taught: if he had enjoyed the advantage

of having studied in Italy; and been bred in the school of the *Caracci*, instead of the seminaries of Somersetshire, I think he might have been arranged among the most prominent masters in either of the *Roman* or *Florentine* academies: all the assistance he had to cultivate his genius was the unremitting attention administered by a tender father, who, though he knew but little of the arts, knew much of his duty: it is but justice to Mr. LAWRENCE to observe that he repays this parental kindness with the most filial piety.

Among many of the most celebrated characters of the times, his portraits of the BISHOP of OXFORD, most of the heads of houses, and the Nobility of the University of Oxford were entitled to much celebrity: all this was effected before he was ten years of age; after that he settled at Bath, where all the beauty and fashion of the place constantly presented themselves to his pencil. After this he made the Metropolis his constant residence, and commenced his studies at the Royal Academy. After a limited time of probation, he was elected an Academician at the demise of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS, and at the age of twenty-eight he succeeded him in the appointment of principal Painter to the King. Swift in his advice to a young Divine, recommends to him to abstain from attempts at wit, for that it was possible he might not possess any: for the same reason I would recommend to Mr. LAWRENCE to discontinue his attempts at the sublime in painting; it is dangerous ground, where to fall, is to be contemptible—he has not ballast enough in his mind.

The most important effort of a young Painter should be to yoke his imagination in the trammels of reason, so that the sober movements of the one may set boundaries to the wildnesses of the other: though this is truly difficult, it must be effected, or else the licentiousness of that quick creating spirit, will only give variegated monsters to the sight, which can never be subservient to historic truth or moral allegory.

Mr. LAWRENCE in his handling, is too profuse of his lights: where there are so many introduced they distract the attention: I know if his colouring is too *sombre* it will not please the ladies, but if too glaring it will offend the eye of the connoisseur. I am sorry to be obliged to remark of the English Artists, that having obtained applause, they early neglect their academic studies: they should remember that *Carlo Maratti*, at the great age of eighty, said he failed not to improve; and *Boucher* the French Painter, at nearly
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the same age, never omitted one night's attendance on his studies in the French Academy. As nature has been very lavish of her gifts to Mr. LAWRENCE, I heartily recommend it to him to omit no opportunity by study to improve those gifts: his present manner is too chalkey, too fluttering, and too undetermined.

I have much reason to believe, that this gentleman has been injured in his professional movements, by the presuming interference of men who were not calculated to pass judgment upon the fine arts. The disgusting, impertinent affectation of saucy drivellers, when commenting upon similar productions, is a melancholy proof how far our pride can subdue our discretion. Mr. ARTHUR YOUNG, in a book of travels, has inserted the following passage, which is dated from Bologna. "In the Church of Saint Giovanne, in Monte, there is the famous Saint Cecilia of *Raphael*, of which Sir ROBERT STRANGE has given so fine a print, and in which he has done *ample justice* to the original." This is evidently an erroneous criticism, as the Engraver quoted, never possessed the powers of doing ample justice to the works of so divine a Painter. Sir ROBERT STRANGE did wonders in the graphic art, considering the disadvantages of his education. But Mr. YOUNG should be taught to know that no Engraver can do complete justice to the best efforts of a Painter, who does not draw as correctly, and understand the human anatomy as well. The grand circumstance which elevates the person who designs, from him who merely copies that design, is briefly this, that the *first* must be illumined by the rare influence of genius before he can be eminently considered, but the *latter* may be highly respectable in his more servile province, without possessing any such Godlike advantages. Perhaps it would have been as wise, though not so pompous, if Mr. YOUNG had written more about *Turnips* and less of *Virtu*.



Mr. HOPPNER.

Mr. HOPPNER, R. A. was born in London, and educated, as the child of a domestic, under the direction of his Majesty; from which circumstance many have inferred, that he is a natural offspring from the royal loins, and this idea has not been sufficiently weakened by his own broad suggestions.

In the earlier part of his life, it was his good fortune to associate with some of the most brilliant characters of the age, at the house of a *Mrs. Wright, in Pall-Mall, whose youngest daughter he has since married. As Mrs. Wright was celebrated for modelling the human visage in wax, and possessed a strong and masculine understanding, her house became the rendezvous for the Legislator and the Artist, and there I have often conversed with the late Lord Camden, Doctor Franklin, Mr. Garrick, Samuel Foote, Dr. Dodd, Mr. West, Silas Deane, &c.

When Mr. HOPNER first painted, I conceived but a very limited hope of his success: he appeared to have much confidence, with little ability, and his excessive vanity superseded his puny judgment: he laboured to surpass all at a period, when he could rival none, and thought the charitable praise of Mr. Henry Bunbury, was equal to all the advantages resulting from the most mature and envied renown!

Every Artist has, in a greater or lesser degree, a manner of execution, either peculiar to himself, or imitative of some reputable example; but this gentleman has greedily assumed the manners of many; having had no prescribed master, he has boldly made free with all; and having but a callow knowledge of propriety, he unfortunately preferred finery to harmony, and cunning to truth; though candor impels me to acknowledge, that some of his more recent performances involve a purer air and grace, and seem to promise, like the orisons of a magdalen, that the sins and blandishments of youth, are regretted and given over. His Portrait of Lady CAROLINE CAPEL was one of the best Pictures in the late exhibition. There was an air of maternal tenderness without affectation in the principal figure, and the reposing Infant was delicately imagined. The face of Lady CAROLINE appeared more like artificial bloom than the glow of health, and there was too great a predominance of green throughout the whole.

This gentleman may be properly said to deal in *elegant littlenesses*; his taste is unquestionably very great, as far as that taste is connected with trifling objects: he has made no effort to be *grand*, but has been very laborious to acquire *grace*, and in that very desirable province he has been partially

* During the American War, I wrote many letters to Mr. Hancock, Mr. Adams, &c at the express desire and suggestions of this Lady, who maintained a correspondence, through me, with the Chiefs of the Congress.

tially successful. I could offer many objections to his childish propensity to render his objects gaudy, but this is an illicit effect, which may be denominated as the vice of *modern* Portrait Painters; I say *modern* rather emphatically, as the Masters of the old Schools never practised it; they considered it truly as a departure from the modest harmony of Nature and appropriate ornament. We cannot see a portrait of a pretty woman now, but it is covered with ensigns and top-gallants, like a ship of war in a national gala; and they are made to seem like weak, vain creatures, more dependent for attraction upon the fluttering, motley trappings of vanity, than that growing fascination which results from regarding purity, and those bewitching proportions which constitute beauty, and makes us idolatrous.

There is a determination in the outline of *Vandyk*, *Titian*, and *Rembrandt*, which leaves no doubt of their capacity to effect whatever Nature and Truth presented to their contemplation; and yet that *contour* is so cunningly and masterly wrought, as to be palpable without being coarsely edged with a line, which is too much the fault of Mr. ROMNEY; but the Portrait Painters among us are dashing and indecisive from ignorance; they copy the worst parts of Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS, who, with all his merits, was happy to be slovenly, when it was not possible that he could be perfect. Mr. HOPFNER participates in this viciousness of style in a very lamentable degree.

That Artist who begins his labour, with colours of a gaudy tendency, may be compared to an indifferent vocal performer, who commences his song in a key too high; and the consequence with both will be, that neither can adequately fulfil the purposes of their undertaking. If I had a young man, of apparent genius, under my tuition, I would carefully hide from his observation the productions of modern Artists, and make him study only from the more excellent of the old Masters, who scarcely ever used any other than *earthly colours*, which possess an inherent property, or power to withstand the test of time and the elements.

In the Pictures annually exposed to sale, as imported from the Continent, we have, to use the jargon of the dealers, the *first thoughts* and the *second thoughts* of eminent men; that is, such primary exertions of the mind, as were hastily committed to canvas, to be surveyed and approved by the Artists, at leisure; but our British Professors can seldom have their works thus characterised, as in whatever light
their

their productions may be viewed, they are assuredly uninfluenced by sentiment, and innocent of *thinking*.

Mr. PETERS.

THE REV. WILLIAM PETERS, L. L. B. R. A. is a native of Ireland; his father held an inconsiderable place in the Custom-house of Dublin, and gave him such an education as his circumstances warranted; when young he was in habits of intimacy with the late Mr. WEST, then Master of the National Academy of Design in that city, and from him he acquired the first rudiments of drawing.

He had not made much advancement in study, when he was sufficiently fortunate to gain the patronage of some eminent personages in that capital, who thinking that he possessed some traits of genius, very liberally contributed to send him to Italy, where, as he asserts, the Imperial Academy at Florence elected him a Member of their institution.

His efforts in Italy did not create much notoriety, or involve much promise, as to his future operations: the most conspicuous labour was a copy of a celebrated picture at Parma, commonly called *San. Gierolamo*, and which is now placed as an altar-piece in the Church of St. Saffron Walden, in Essex; he also copied RUBENS his picture, of the *Four Philosophers*, in the Pitti Valace, at Florence.

On his return to England he became patronised by the late DUKE OF RUTLAND; at whose desire he went to Paris, in 1782, to copy the famous picture by LE BRUN, in the Carmelite Church, which is a portrait of MADAME DE LA VALIERE, imagined in the crisis of conversion, and as casting from her beautiful person the ornaments and gewgaws of fashion, previous to her entering the Cloister. This copy is at Belvoir Castle, in Lincolnshire; the original I have often beheld with admiration, and ever classed it as the *chef d'œuvre* of its author, even after reviewing the Battles of Alexander from the same powerful pencil: the only drawback upon its importance is, that I suspect him to have been somewhat indebted to the divine and graceful CORREGGIO for the position.

In the period that Mr. PETERS was at Paris, the late DUKE of MANCHESTER was Ambassador from the British Court; seizing the occasion, the Duke requested the Queen of France to permit Mr. PETERS to make a portrait of the Dauphin;

Dauphin; a council was immediately held, where it was seriously decided, that the effluvia of the paint might be injurious to the health of the infant; and this idea was communicated in a letter from MADAME DE POLIGNAC to the Duke, in the name of the Queen! — Perhaps the folly and vanity of our nature cannot be more effectually exemplified than by contrasting such excessive caution in an instance so trivial, with those succeeding calamities, which have so recently deluged that unhappy family in blood.

'Ere Mr. PETERS was entered of Exeter College, Oxford, he had the *pyebald* fortune to associate with Earl —, and warm himself in the full beam of his patronage, when he enacted some offices not strictly consonant with rigorous purity. In such embarrassments Mr. PETERS was compelled by events, to think more of the attitudes of the Lesbian Venus than the assumption of the beatified Virgin, and must have blushed himself into contrition. During this contaminating progress, he was not unfrequently elbowed by a *mean Miscreant*, who fed hungrily upon the dirty bounties of his licentious Principal. To this creeping knave Mr. PETERS condescended to be friendly; but as the friendship of bad men is to be deplored even more than their enmity, he soon discovered that this artful impostor was laying a train to calumniate and destroy his benefactor: the truth is, that he looked with a jealous eye upon the son of the pallet, and apprehended that he might be superseded in his extraordinary dominion over the will of the amiable Peer. Mr. PETERS, (who neither wants good nature or benevolence,) saw and comprehended the whole mass of mischief in *embrio*, and as a contest, on that occasion, would not have been precisely honorable, he resigned all the advantages resulting from such a *Magnifico*, and left his more *mercurial* opponent master of an unfought field. This grey sprig of the Peerage has such rare powers of necromancy, he could make his Lady a Griffin, a Painter an Ecclesiastic, a Cobler a Groom of the Stole, and a PIMP a *Magistrate*!

When Mr. PETERS was happily enabled, by the ordinations of a dozy Prelate, to forego the impurities of the laity, and put his foot upon the *Old Man*, the vane of his rich imagination instantly took an opposite direction; from the bowers and blisses of a southern *Cytherea* to the north point of chilling morality, the electric flash was less swift than his retreat from error; he discreetly left it to junior competitors to paint to the passions, while he usurped on canvass the

the regulation of the soul: thus could this versatile, though great man, exhibit in the revolution of one moon, the very *Tops and Bottoms* of humanity.—Wonderful æra! Amiable Priest!—It is, with the discerning, a circumstance of doubt, which will be arranged, in futurity, as the more extraordinary occurrence, the conversion of PAUL at Damascus, or WILLIAM PETERS in Grosvenor-Square.

Here let the voluptuary ponder and repent. This excellent gentleman; this well washed Christian, may operate, as an instance of social goodness, without the trouble of expounding Holy Writ in the Temple.

“ *Example* draws where precept fails;
“ As sermons are less read than tales.”

He aptly banished the scruples of a narrow mind, and swallowed the thirty-nine articles of faith, with the eagerness of a famished Monk; and if the salvation of his neighbour required it, has a stomach for thirty-nine times as many. If ever there was a general shriek in Pandemonium, it must have been when his ample shoulders were hallowed with the *toga* of divinity: he gratuitously arrays the Saints in new drapery, and wipes his breech with the ballads of *Anacreon*.

These are the deeds which fame is proud to tell,
None but himself can be his parallel!

Considering Mr. PETERS as an Artist, I think his conception imperfect, if not vulgar; his management of the *costume* betrays no grandeur of sentiment; in the primary essential point of *Drawing* he is miserably defective; many of his pictures in the Shakespear Gallery seem as if copied from Birmingham teaboards, and not the original efforts of an R. A. his colouring is tawdry and puerile, and wholly foreign to the gradual tints of Nature.

Since his holy inauguration, he has almost exclusively attempted to illustrate what a Milesian would phrase, *the other side of Death*; there has happened but one vain effort, when he proved false to his acknowledged piety; and then the demon inwove with his idea, and tempted him, in the shape of *Abraham Newland*, to a delineation of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*; but as the execution is imperfect, the error is but half accomplished, and a year of penance may progressively whiten him into purity again. How easily a man may fully his jerkin, as VIRGIL says, but how difficult it is to scour it to its pristine beauty.

Facilis descensus averni,
Sed revocare gradum, &c.

I have

I have heard it whispered, there are four votaries of the Church, who affect to believe that Mr. PETERS is not inveterately canonical, in preferring the analysis of Beauty to his Rosary; I know not the indisputed dogma of the *Pontifex Maximus* on this head, but I will presume to affirm, that more danger is to be dreaded from the intemperance of a swilling conclave of Vicars in a convocation, than from the wanderings of a playful Artist's pencil; and especially one who eschewed reprobation when a novitiate in *Alma Mater*, by drawing the Whore of Babylon without a scarlet petticoat, and lighting his mundungus with the sonnets of *Peter Aretine*!—Hogarth was as mighty a moralist as Bishop Tillotson. Oh! I detest such puny cavillers at ingenuity, who would rather suffer the devil to ride rough-shod and unquestioned over the privileged orders of society, than have him shot at through any piece of artillery untamped with the diocesan arms. But Envy is sleepless in her vile manœuvres; so let the heart of W. PETERS cease to palpitate with the too delicate fear of temporal shame.

His picture of a Family bursting from a Sepulchre at the Last Day, like a vigorous potatoe through the encumbering sod, is ludicrously wonderful. His Angel carrying the Spirit of a Child to Paradise, and their Arrival in the Awful Presence, are pieces superior to my limited comprehension. I shall only remark, with becoming humility, that the writhing attitude of a boy brought near a fiery furnace, in a state of nature, would be the same as that depicted in the tranquilizing Empyrean: but I confess that such subjects are not to be measured by the faculties of a sinner like me. Under favour, I think the old leaven breaks forth in Mr. PETERS, by his uniformly pourtraying angels of the softer sex: I have some doubts that the whole Hierarchy could not justify this passionate partiality in their worthy brother. Mr. PETERS carries his gallantry and his gratitude so far, that I should not be amazed, if he designed the *Final Judgment*, to see the DUTCHESS of RUTLAND in a padufoy, and the DUKE of MANCHESTER on a velvet cushion,—but, as ZENO has said, this is a pathless track, and I must wander no farther; I wish JOHN BUNYAN were alive, to write a criticism upon such inspiring performances; which, though inexplicable to a common apprehension, are clear and luminous to the regenerated.

Mr. PETERS seems now to have arrived at the summit of his chaste ambition; he is a *Free Mason* of the first quality,

and in the language of the brethren, may be said to be literally *tiled in*; though the icy thumb of death has robbed him of two rum Dukes, he can retire occasionally for consolation to the embraces of JACHIN and BOAZ, who commanded their disciples to live by *Rule* and act upon the *Square*. Though this sacerdotal limner is humble in his pretensions, he has a sort of local dignity thrust upon him, and is now, as it were, in spite of his teeth, a gulpher of Aristocratic and graphic honors; he is no less than a Royal Academician, a Bachelor of Laws; Rector of Woolstorp, in Lincolnshire, and Knipton, in Leicestershire; Prebend of Lincoln; Chaplain to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; General Confessor to the Knights of the Brush, and Provincial Grand Master of the County of Lincoln.

Mr. OPIE.

JOHN OPIE, R. A. is a native of Cornwall; where he originally followed the profession of a house carpenter; he was born in 1762, and in 1780 he manifested an inclination to burst from his menial trammels and become an Artist. The first dawnings of this honorable desire were manifested by his scrawling a rude resemblance of any particular object with chalk, in those hours which individuals thus situated, but less gifted, and less industrious, generally appropriate to mean habits of merriment, or unprofitable inertia.

The earlier specimens of Mr. OPIE's genius were properly and generously encouraged by several enlightened gentlemen in his neighbourhood, who fostered him into the ambition of painting portraits for a pecuniary reward: he commenced his professional career at *Falmouth*; where he was accustomed to wait upon the passengers who were windbound, and request them to sit for their portraits, which he executed with some address, and at an humble price*. From *Falmouth* he removed to *Exeter*; where he acquired an additional polish to his capacity, and from thence removed to *London*.

I shall

* When Mr. OPIE was pursuing his laudable attempt to become meritorious at *Falmouth*, he selected an old mendicant of the place, with the features of a Patriarch, as a proper object for study, and he copied his worn lineaments so happily, that the Portraits were in request, and eagerly purchased by those who were indifferent to the fate of the original. One of these efforts, which Mr. OPIE conceived to be the most successful, he brought to the metropolis, and carried it to Mr. WEST for his opinion, who approved of it so warmly, as to shew it to the

I shall not imitate the language of his particular flatterer, by calling him a rustic *Apelles*, or the first historical painter of this country, because he is far from deserving such description; he has more ability than falls to the lot of the million in general, but much less than he ought to possess even to be considered as an historical painter of the usual degree. His colouring is slovenly, and very frequently wholly inapplicable to the object. His drawing is hard, and best suited to inelegant images. His draperies are of so coarse a texture, as must render them, in action, intolerable to the wearer, and his comprehension of a subject is so ungracious, that he may be said to vulgarise nature in proportion as he enlarges the sphere of execution.

I have not seen any performance from Mr. OPIE's pencil, that could induce me to believe, he had ever possessed one idea of genuine female beauty. It has been asserted, that beauty, like taste, has no unerring standard; but this apology is more strongly applicable to the prejudices of various nations in dissimilar climates, than to the discountenancing that happy arrangement of features, which the wise and the impassioned of the most refined States have denominated pure beauty. That artist who can be satisfied that he is pleased with an appearance, without enquiring into the causes, or seeking a developement of the elements of that pleasure, will run no hazard of being quoted by future claimants upon renown, as an instance that is either imitative or enviable.

It

King: the consequence of this liberal measure, from Mr. WEST, was a desire on the part of his Majesty to purchase the Head. Mr. OPIE, influenced by the hope of having his works hung up in the Palace, consented, with some reluctance, to sell his darling production to his Majesty. In order to render what was valuable more attractive, he purchased a frame superbly wrought, which cost him *eleven guineas*, which he borrowed on the occasion: thus enabled, as he imagined, to claim an handsome reward, he waited upon the President, who informed the young Adventurer, that his Majesty meant to purchase the Picture not as a *King*, but as a private *Gentleman*, and required Mr. OPIE to fix the price. After some deliberation, the Cornish expectant said that he would leave the terms to the King. Mr. WEST complimented the junior Professor upon his *discernment*, in thus relying upon regal honor, and sent the Picture to Buckingham House. In a few days after, Mr. OPIE called upon Mr. WEST, pregnant with expectations of the most sanguine kind, when Mr. WEST assured him, that the King was so highly satisfied with his *bargain*, that he had ordered him to present Mr. OPIE with the contents of a paper, which he at that instant slipped into the trembling hand of the zealous youth, who carried it triumphantly home, that he might ruminate upon the bounty of his Sovereign: he arrived, and unfolding the paper with a panting heart, saw *nine guineas and a half and sixpence!!*

It is the common lunacy of the day, among our junior artists, to claim the proud and high station of an Historical Painter, in the instant that they can draw a figure in the Life Academy, with a decent analogy to truth, and seem wholly regardless of those numerous collateral qualifications arising from intense study, which the most famous Masters that ever existed, of all nations, deemed indispensable; but alas! this overweening presumption is not confined to the Painters, but is equally applicable to a majority of those who have recently written upon the subject, in this country. Hence have arisen such poems and books upon the arts, as common sense could never recognise; but though the authors were ignorant they were rich, and wealth can obtain a passport from presumption, at all hours and in every latitude. It is a vain endeavour for men to write upon the polite arts with success, who have not been professionally trained; and it is equally vain for any to expect to be great in the sublime pursuit, who have not been duly educated, and intimate with corresponding sciences.

“ Yet he that has but impudence,
To every thing will have pretence.”

If I were to fix my judgment of Mr. OPIE by his most laboured performances for the last three years, I should affirm that he had arrived at that acmé of merit which is limited by his disposition, but not by his powers. I know not whether I should ascribe this discontinuance of exertion, so common and so destructive among our Artists of a certain age, to indolence or vanity; perhaps it is a consequence issuing from a mixture of both. As in the busy circles of life, we meet with all who wish to be happier, and but few who wish to be wiser; so in the contracted scale of pictorial competition, we meet with all who wish to be more wealthy, and but few who wish to be exemplary and truly noble.

From the tenor of Mr. OPIE's subjects, it appears that he has selected the terrific points of history for the illustration of his pencil; and this predilection is with him judicious, as it is more consonant with a rude mind to embrace terror than the graces. It is in painting as in acting, where the terrible attributes are more easily caught and exemplified than others of a milder mien; for whatever borders upon the *outrageous* in either undertaking is more instantaneously impressive and active upon the passions than the more calm effects produced by the regular progression of ordinary

ordinary incidents; but the operation of horror is less durable, as the understanding is more laborious to rid itself of emotions called forth by the contemplation of a Gorgon than an Angel: we are scared and entrapped into amazement by the violent administration of the first, but the attention is seduced into an acceptable bondage by the pleasing witcheries of the other. The most complicated and freezing composition I ever saw of this tendency, was *Death's Dance*, by *Holbein*; which is a capital specimen of the management of a dreadful groupe, and has a peculiar influence upon the mind, inasmuch as we are accustomed to annex the rage of a forked skeleton, as exclusively busy in the suppression of life. This is one of the unalienable prejudices of education, which generates a shuddering, at the expence of our firmness and reason as men; knowing that to be finite, under all those contradictory and distressing vicissitudes which environ our chequered state, is an event truly desirable.

His picture of the *Death of Rizzio*, is presumed to be his master-piece, and there are some parts of it which deserve commendation; though, upon the whole, it is too heavy, intrusive, and *carpetty*. On the material point of aerial perspective, this gentleman appears to give himself but little trouble; and certainly the less trouble a thing is effected with, the greater compliment accrues to the doer. I regret that he sees Nature through the same medium as Mr. WEST, and the generous and productive wench was never viewed through organs more illusory. The identity of the figures in this Artist's performances must destroy the necessary delusion of the canvass, as no animals are correspondently similar. We might imagine from the sombrouness of his tints, that he was a monopoliser of *brisk dust* and *red ocher*. He, like Mr. WEST, seldom introduces a Patriarch or a Hero, but he makes him appear to sweat under the incumbrance of his drapery, which can only be enforced to float upon the bosom of the air, by the operations of a storm:—they all look as so many porters, overladen in a blanket manufactory, and as deploring the inconvenience; each man of them looks prepared for the rigorous clime of Spitzbergen!

I would advise every Painter, who wishes to behold an occasional personification of the *Terrible*, to visit the Theatre on those nights when Mrs. SIDDONS enacts *Lady Macbeth*, or some character similar in dreadful propensity; he might
might

might then behold the sublimity of desperation and anguish, more perfectly exhibited. than it ever was, in my memory, by a female. If this lady can read Italian, it would be very gratifying to the judicious to hear her recite *Dante's Inferno*: I should be pleased to listen to the tone of her voice, and mark her eye and attitudes when she was enforcing those singular and nervous passages which have heretofore charmed the mighty *Bonarotti* into a necromantic enthusiasm, that lifted him above himself, and made him forget that he was human.

Yet I should not suffer this temperate estimate of Mr. OPIE's ability to pass current in society, without acknowledging it as my belief that he has already atchieved wonders, considering the disadvantages attendant upon his progress, and that had he been more studious, he might have been very estimable; his want of taste may argue a paucity of sentiment, but he might be very correct notwithstanding. It is not my desire to be harsh in my sentiments towards this Gentleman; but I cannot avoid observing, that he does not, in my opinion, improve in proportion as he becomes older: I have seen some heads from his pencil in Cornwall, which promised a better harvest. I know not which would be more immediately required from him by truth, the unlearning much of his accustomed erroneous manner, or the acquisition of that dignified method, through the path of rigorous application, which rendered *Michael Angelo* great, and *Rafaella* divine.



Mr. WALE.

SAMUEL WALE, R. A. was born at Yarmouth, in Norfolk; and was among the first Members of the Royal Academy, and by them appointed as Professor of Perspective to the establishment: he died in Little-court, Castle-street, Leicester Fields, where he had lived for many years, and was, in his day, conspicuous for his designs for the graphic embellishment of books. He was much indebted for his reputation to the fine taste of Mr. GRIGNION*, who usually engraved,

* Mr. CHARLES GRIGNION studied in Paris, and was the pupil of *Le Bas*, and improved in London, by *Gravelot*, in concert with *Gainborough* and *Major*. This gentleman may be properly styled the father of the English School of Engraving: considering his disadvantages he did wonders: he was denied the privileges and benefits resulting from the study of correct designs, and unhappily destined to *amend*, not *follow*, the

engraved; and I should say, ameliorated his drawings. He was one of those modest few who wished to journey to the grave through the by-paths and silent avenues of life, and avoid that broad highway, where all who are seen are noticeable and decried!

To be master of so restricted a subject as perspective, implies no great compliment to the faculties of the professor: for though it be a study very material to the Painter, it is of that order in the scale of thinking, which an aspiring mind scorns to be valued upon, though it must be acquired to regulate bolder acquisitions—it is a sort of drill serjeant to the more effectual attainments of an Artist, and rather calculated to keep up a due and beautiful subordination among the turbulent offspring of genius, than to make any claims itself upon honor or even respect.

Perspective, or the *Art of Seeing*, is that by which we are enabled to contemplate and depict the likeness of all visible objects, as they appear through the medium of the visual ray: the manner of this speculation is by radiations of light, direct, reflected, or broken. Direct radiations are those which pass between the eye and the object; reflected radiations are those which appear on any solid body, globular, conical, pyramidal, or cylindrical; broken radiations are those which may be seen through a glass divided into surfaces:—the base of any body is the plane upon which it stands; the altitude is the perpendicular space between the base and the eye; the visual print is where all the beams of the eye unite; the horizontal line is parallel to the horizon of the earth. This is a brief outline of the art, without a deep knowledge of which, no man can be successful in imitating nature, or the objects that adorn and encumber it.

When I was in the habit of studying in the Royal Academy, Mr. WALE delivered his lectures, and in the progress of my existence, I never saw a man so diffident in the communication of what he so well knew: he seemed nearly paralysed in a situation, where duty and good manners enforced the meritorious to be attentive, and the presuming to be silent. I was inclined to account for such a distressing tremor, from the belief that I beheld a modest man drawn from

unintelligible attempts at delineation by SAMUEL WALE, and the lumps, which were meant for extremities, in the designs of HAYMAN. Before the engravings of Mr. GRIGNON appeared, we had no reputable specimen of the graphic art in being, in this Country, if we except the spirited frontispieces by that ingenious Frenchman, *Louis Du Guernier*, and which were coarse, though full of character and expression.

from the calm recesses of solitude into the blaze of observation, and compelled to assume a character in the evening of his life, for which it was necessary he should have been prepared by youthful ardour and constitutional effrontery. A private man may be very generally estimable without the aids of impudence, but a public man, in a public exertion, cannot.

Mr. BARTOLOZZI.

FRANCIS BARTOLOZZI, R. A. is a native of Florence, in Italy; he studied engraving under WAGNER. While pursuing his studies at Florence he was invited to England by Mr. DALTON, who was at that period employed by his present Majesty to collect drawings in the Italian States, and discover the best historic engraver. Mr. BARTOLOZZI was thus solicited in consequence of a violent dispute, which had previously taken place between the late Lord BUTE and Sir ROBERT STRANGE, relative to the engraving of two portraits of the King and Lord BUTE, from paintings by RAMSAY, which he was requested to perform, but eluded the request in pursuance of a resolution he had formed to go to Italy that summer. This denial highly exasperated the vain and powerful party, who dispatched Mr. DALTON, then librarian to his Majesty, upon the important expedition alluded to; in the interim the meritorious but unfortunate WILLIAM WYNNE RYLAND presented himself, and did the graphic deed of note and glory.

His very beautiful and correct imitations of the drawings of *Guercino*, in the collection of the King, and which I think his best works, were among his first performances on his arrival here: after these he engraved his *Venus*, *Cupid*, and *Satyr*, and his nearly incomparable *Clytie*; since that period he has suffered his high reputation to moulder, by admitting his name to be affixed to works which he had scarcely touched with his own magic graver. If such measures arose from his overweening goodnature, I must pity such an amiable weakness; but if they arose from his love of money, I regret it, though it were acquired to strengthen his excessive habits of benevolence, for he solaces all that come within his gates.

According to the institutes of the Royal Academy, the number of Engravers are limited to six, and they are considered

dered in the inferior scale of comparative merit with the Painters. Mr. BARTOLOZZI, conscious of his own strength, presented himself as a Painter, and was admitted as such; and happy were they all to have such an acquisition. All this was just, as to denominate him as a mere Engraver would be to circumscribe my language within the limits of ignorance, as he is not only something more, but almost every thing that the hope of imitative science can embody: he draws better than any other man in the world, and can give a truth and durability to that design, beyond the powers of any other individual in the same department.

The late I. K. SHERWIN was the most meritorious of his pupils, but was never successful when he presumed to engrave from his own designs: he had all the daringness of genius without the accomplishments of study, and his licentiousness destroyed his powers. Messrs. TOMKINS, SCHIOVANETTI, BOVI, and GILLRAY, have been occasionally attractive, but as their flights have been uniformly in a middle sky, I regard their progress unimpressed by either wonder or repugnance. His other pupils are unworthy of their great master.

Mr. BARTOLOZZI's manner is so rigorously established, that he cannot engrave portraits with all the diversity necessary to the human character; and he deserves reproach for suffering his name to be put to so many imperfect performances from other persons.—It is a prostitution derogatory to his talents.

It has been violently asserted, that BARTOLOZZI's prints want a due tone of *colour*, or (in language more comprehensive to common minds) that degree of relative force, which constitutes the subordination of objects. The truth is, that he suffers in his celebrity, from his apprehension of doing too much, which injure his prints, as far as the declension of tint is concerned. Sir ROBERT STRANGE and he both engraved a print from the Circumcision, by *Guercino*, and the ingenious knight made this remark, that though he confessed the superiority of his rival, in the very essential points of drawing; yet he believed that he should, in his turn, triumph, from his superior knowledge of effect, arising from his more liberal and bold management of the graver. It must be observed, that it is a principle of the ultramontane schools not to make any print black; they are rooted enemies to the idea of a very deep tint, which they conceive, and in my opinion wrongly, injurious to the inter-
P
terests

terests of modest nature;—this prejudice is exemplified in the works of two modern Artists of the Roman school, *Porporerti* and *Morchian*. The famous French Engraver, *Gerard Audran*, was never timid on this head, which gives his prints such irresistible and desirable force; but this great man may be said almost to have painted in copper! his strokes of the instrument are so free, noble, and true.

Previous to the publicity of *BARTOLOZZI*, (excepting *WOOLLETT*,* and *RYLAND*'s works,) our prints were inconsiderable, and of little value; but since that period, they have formed a great article of commerce. *Mr. R. SAYER*, of Fleet Street, and *Mr. BOWLES*, of St. Paul's Church-yard, had occasionally trafficked in this way; but the efforts of art which they exported, were of that trifling and uninteresting nature, as to affix a degradation upon the polite arts of England, among the Continental observers.

When I connect my knowledge of his amazing industry with his philosophic disregard of riches, it produces the most rapturous sensations, and I glow with ardour to do homage to a man who is singularly great without vanity, and singularly good without ostentation: he approaches so near to what is perfect, that he amends whatever comes within his cognizance. His decided superiority as an Engraver, over all existing competition, is so manifest, that I should feel a particular pride in calling him a Briton; but as that gratification is denied, I shall take much honor to myself in belonging to that order of species which he has so sublimed by his professional excellence, and so cherished by his practical philanthropy. When he undertook to engrave the *Death of Lord Chatham*, he sent for *TESTOLINI* from Italy, to assist him, but found him unequal to the task.

Mr. BARTOLOZZI forms a timely point for the graphic disciples of the present day to rally round and be honestly ambitious. We have a *SHARPE*, a *HEATH*, a *HALL*, a *NEAGLE*, a *FITTLER*, *cum multis aliis*, but we have no classic

* *Mr. WILLIAM WOOLLETT* was a native of Kent. He was the pupil of *Mr. TINNEY*, Engraver, of Fleet-street, and had the advantage of studying in the same house with *CHATELAIN*, who was the first Engraver in this Country who gave a character to trees. The first Print *Mr. WOOLLET* published was his celebrated *Niobe*, in which his fellow-pupil, *ANTHONY WALKER*, engraved the figures. It is extraordinary that his *Death of Wolfe* should be generally preferred to his *La Hogue*, although it has less merit. His intense application caused a *fistula in ano*, which terminated his being. He was buried in St. Pancras Church-yard.

classic precision except in the productions of this estimable Florentine. They all seem labouring exclusively for the kitchen, but none for the attainment of a valued celebrity : if such negligence becomes proverbial, such Artists cannot be amazed to be arranged with vulgar handicraftsmen, such as drapers, weavers, tinkers, and taylors. Drawing is the grammar of the polite arts, and without it nothing can be done. The harmonious conjunction of strokes was managed better by STRANGE and RYLAND* than BARTOLOZZI, but they were mere strokes, and nothing else: they worked like automata, without souls.† An Engraver without a thorough acquaintance with the origin and insertion of the human muscles, is like an audacious reptile who would engage to conduct a ship, though ignorant of the principles of navigation; it is possible he may be right, but it is wonderful if he is not wrong. Such prints as Mr. HEATH engraves are more captivating for the ladies, or that numberless order of men who are scarcely otherwise than ladies in disguise: his mechanical knowledge is unquestionably very high; but should the period occur when truth shall be in general request, such laboured, ungendered, silky, unnatural nothingnesses will be consigned to the

* Mr. WILLIAM WYNNE RYLAND was the son of a Copper-plate Printer in the Old Bailey, London. He first studied under Mr. WALE, and then became a disciple to Mr. FRANCIS RAVENET, a Frenchman. The first print he published was an etching of SHUTER and WOODWARD, in *Bobadil* and *Master Stephen*, after a Drawing by NATHANIEL DANCE. He went to Paris, and studied under BOUCHER, COCHIN, and LE BAS, where he engraved a *Leda*, which established his fame. Shortly after that period he returned to London, and was employed to engrave a whole length of his present Majesty, after RAMSAY, which procured him a pension of two hundred pounds per annum. His great merit and suavity of manners, procured him the friendship of CHURCHILL, the Poet, and other eminent personages. The ingenious Mr. ROGERS published two volumes, in imitation of the drawings of the best Italian Masters, in which work Mr. RYLAND had the ill-fortune to introduce what is called the *stipple manner*, and which has proved eventually so destructive to the dignity of the graphic art. I shall draw a veil over the evening of his life, as the recital would be painful to every admirer of excellence.

† I would advise every Engraver to work by a North light, as it is more serene and equal than any other; but when the plate is finished, he should examine it by a South light, which administers a beam less flattering to the Artist, and more glaringly scrutinizing. Many Engravers fail in their hope of being admirable, from not knowing the true state of the plate before it is finally committed to the press, more than from any other cause :—they seem eager to deceive themselves, though they must know upon reflection, it is impossible to deceive the public.

the shrines of *Cloacina*, while the Muses sing the *requiem* of imposture.

The want of knowledge of the elements of criticism in the public is to be lamented with the deepest regret, inasmuch as it works to the introduction and establishment of common falsehood, in every thing that is materially combined with the *Polite Arts*, the *Stage*, and the higher classes of philosophy. As society exists in this realm, it is more profitable to impose than to inform; hence is it that TALENTS and VIRTUE are elbowed in every circle in this polluted island; and our youth, who are trained to be, what is phrased successful, are servile in the first instance, fallacious in the second, and contemptible, if not infamous, in the issue.

Mr. SERRES.

The late DOMINICK SERRES, R. A. was born at Aux, the Capital of Gascony, in France, in 1722; he received his education, which was not of the first order, at the public seminary in that City, and was designed to become a member of a religious establishment in that vicinity, but this designation of his parents being repugnant to his own desires, he quitted his natal spot, in the night, *a la fourdine*, and travelled on foot to Spain, where he embarked for South America, in the capacity of a common sailor: having passed through the varied gradations of a seaman, he became the Master of a trading vessel to the Havannah, where, during the war of 1752, he was taken prisoner, by a British frigate, and brought prisoner to this country.

Having received some instructions in drawing, and being in great distress, he found it convenient to commence the profession of an Artist, and being better acquainted with naval tactics than the human anatomy, he assumed the province of a Marine Painter.

Shortly after this period, he married an Englishwoman, and then formed the resolution of residing here for life: though he commenced the intricate studies appertaining to such a pursuit when he had passed the meridian of his life, yet by unremitting exertions, and the kind assistance of Mr. BROOKING, (who was the first Painter in that line, in Great Britain) he arrived at such a degree of perfection as to be honored with the patronage of the late gallant LORD HAWKE, and other distinguished Officers of the navy.

At

At the institution of the Royal Academy, Mr. SERRES was solicited to become one of the forty Members; and in consequence of his painting three pictures of the naval review at Portsmouth, in 1772, the King appointed him as his Marine Painter. He terminated a life of industry and honorable success, at the advanced age of seventy-two, and was interred at Paddington. It has been objected to Mr. SERRES, that he made a *Sea of his own*, and that all his waves appeared as so many muffins in a state of revolution:—it is certain that he did not view that perturbed element with such a correct vision as *Vandewelde* or *Bachhuysen*, but it is generally admitted that his shipping were admirable.

Since the demise of Mr. SERRES, this branch of the polite arts has been evidently on the decline: the most prominent efforts towards its restoration, are those which have been recently exhibited by Mr. LOUTHERBOURG, and Mr. CLEVELY, upon the glorious incident which occurred upon the first of June, 1794; of whom it is but justice to aver, that Mr. CLEVELY has been the more perfect. Mr. LOUTHERBOURG's picture on this popular subject is too licentious in the points of historic fact to please any nautical observer.

Mr. CLEVELY's performance did not impress me, instantaneously, with so much pleasure as Mr. LOUTHERBOURG's; but it had this very desirable effect, that my satisfaction was strengthened in proportion as I viewed it. It is evident that this Artist has a far deeper knowledge of his subject than his compeer, and has not violated authenticity upon any material point: he has not painted to amaze but to satisfy: he has grouped both his pictures with an admirable taste; all the *minutiæ* of the marine are rigorously preserved, and the effect of his atmosphere at morning and evening is strictly compatible with truth and harmony.

Mr. BACON.

JOHN BACON, R. A. This gentleman, like Mr. PROCTOR*, is an instance of the proficiency that may be effected without the aids of extraneous tuition: thus is his present state singularly honorable to himself.

He

* Mr. PROCTOR was a native of Yorkshire, and apprenticed to a mechanic. As an Artist he was self educated; but his merit was so uncommon, that his works would not have been disreputable to the Grecian School. He has been celebrated by the President in his discourses, as an exemplary and mighty genius. His *Ixion* is the finest piece of sculp-

He worked, when young, at the artificial stone manufactory in Whitechapel, but in consequence of his dawning ability, was advised by Mr. MosER, (the original keeper of the Royal Academy,) to remove to the west end of the Metropolis, where by the direct and incessant efforts of study and practical application, he became foremost in the rank of national sculptors.

He got the premium of 50 guineas at the Arts and Sciences, for his emblematic figure of the OCEAN.

Dr. MARKHAM, the present Archbishop of York, was so highly pleased with his figure of *Narcissus*, which was exhibited in the Royal Academy, that he sought the Artist at his house in Wardour-street, and with all that glow of kindness which warms the liberal heart of the Metropolitan, engaged him to do a bust of his Majesty; which Mr. BACON executed to the satisfaction of his good patron and the August Original. It is reported that he had never worked in marble previous to that undertaking: this circumstance led to his being employed by the Parliament and the City, to raise fabricks to the memory of LORD CHATHAM: he had 3,000 guineas for each.

When I look around me for a leading proof of Mr. BACON's abilities, I naturally recur to the monument in Westminster Abbey; and I am unhappy to observe that the execution of this massy pile does not correspond with my hope or the honor of the country, as far as the polite arts are involved. I have considered the sepulchre with due attention, and must confess that the more I surveyed it the more I was dissatisfied: the projecting arm of Lord Chatham is too long; the proportions of the River God (for it may be Neptune, or the Thames, or Fleet Ditch, as far as symbols are concerned,) though colossal, are unchaste, and the knee, which bending obtrudes upon the sight, is too undetermined and too much rounded for the fattest subject imaginable in that position; the draperies, generally speaking, are hard, and are reconcileable only in their folds, to coarse woollen or blankets; the foot of the receding leg of the Britannia must be thirty inches in length, to agree with the palpable

ture ever done by a native of Britain; and his group of *Diomedes devoured by his own horses*, would have become a point of national study; but, alas! he dashed it to pieces in a fit of despair, as he could not procure fifty pounds for the sublime labours of twelve months. He was preparing for a journey to Rome, but his keen sorrows had so worn his heart, that he prematurely perished, and died, like *Rafaele*, in the meridian of his days, but full of honor.

palpable direction of the *tibia* in that limb. I am mortified to believe that our visitors of taste from the Continent should be induced by the celebrity of the subject, to regard this structure as a specimen of British genius in the province of sculpture: the sepulchral absurdities of *Ryfbrack* and old *Kent* are scarcely less admirable.

In the management of the figure of Lord Chatham, Mr. BACON appears to have been scrupulously attentive to the ascribed imbecilities of his frame; which is an unpardonable error, as he should have wrought his semblance, when in the zenith and full blossom of his ability. This statue bears the evident marks of ravages made by a chronic enemy, which, though it be the truth of nature, is an absurd choice of time and circumstances, to explain that unwelcome truth; he should have seemed as the firm delegate of Jove and Virtue; and, in a certain degree, as soaring above mortal infirmity.

“ Comely, and in act
 Rais’d, as of some great matter to begin.
 As when of old some orator renown’d
 In Athens, or free Rome, where eloquence
 Flourish’d, since mute, to some great cause address’d,
 Stood in himself collected, while each part,
 Motion, each act won audience o’er the tongue.”

It is more immediately within the province of the sculptor to excite surprise than the painter; and that statuary who cannot in a comprehensive group, either allegorical or historical, burst upon the senses, and suddenly alarm them into an agitation terminating in wonder, falls far short of exemplifying the sublime principles of his art.

His group of *Hercules* and *Atlas*, in the act of alternately supporting the globe on the Observatory at Oxford, does him great credit; it partakes of the spirit of *Donatello**; it is worked in Portland stone: this is one of his last and most perfect productions.

In defiance of the indigested authority of *Voltaire*, I will insist that France, in the proudest days of her Monarchy, never produced a sculptor of high merit, or one who could deserve those encomiums which he has so lavishly, and injudiciously bestowed upon FRANCIS GIRARDON, who is quoted as the flower of their sculptors. I have surveyed,
 with

* *Donato*, called *Donatello*, was born at Florence, in 1383, and died in 1466: was a sculptor of immense genius, and may be said to be one of those who originally beamed upon the dark ages; and it is asserted, opened the gates of day to *Michael Angelo*!

with particular attention, his Baths of Apollo at Versailles; and his tomb of *Cardinal Richelieu*, in the Church of the Sorbonne at Paris, and could discover none of those true and beautiful traces of art, to justify the vain idea of the satyrist of Ferney, that GIRARDON equalled the ancients in grandeur of imagination and correctness of execution. I shall here remark, that I think the prevailing genius of England and France is manifested in few instances more than in sculpture; the productions of the British Artists being generally too sombrous, clumsy, and overcharged with muscle; while those of the Gallic Artists are generally too light, and convey that air of frivolity, in some degree, which characterises them in nearly all their movements. The most reputed of our statuaries make all their female adults Amazonian, and the most celebrated statuaries among the French make them all apparently as agile as dancers, or of such delicate proportions, that they might rise from the base

“ On the light fantastick toe.”

Every marble figure should be so exquisitely wrought, as to seem like a living body, from the surface of which the blood had been suddenly and totally driven; the muscles should be so cunningly worked, that their origin and insertion should be readily ascertained, and the eye so thoroughly deceived, as to believe that the knitting of the limbs would be obedient to any violence of exertion, without breaking or shivering the component parts; its apt formation should scarce admit a doubt but that its prominences would yield to the slight impression of a lady's finger; it should be so happily constructed as to occasion a temporary oblivion of truth in the observer, who might gaze himself into an entire deception, and eventually marvel that the figure he contemplates is dumb: all this could PHIDIAS, PRAXITELES, SCOPAS, and CLEOMENES effect; and he who cannot is either denied the fine talents appropriate for a statuary, or too indolent to refine and exercise the envied powers of his nature.

True genius is plastic and ramifying, and greatly dependent for the acquisition of dignity, upon the cool and restraining powers of the judgment. When a young man's life is dedicated to the higher regions of study, and he wishes to be conspicuous for the arrangement and application of rare faculties, there is no danger so much to be avoided as the powerful attraction of bold fallacy, which involves, in its

its propelling force, all those enervating captivations, which may be embraced by vulgar minds without much abasement, but cannot by the honourably ambitious without ruin of character. They who wish to be chronicled as exemplary, must hold nothing as estimable but what is unalterably beautiful and true.

Mrs. ANGELICA KAUFFMAN.

This accomplished and singular Lady is a native of Germany; she studied the fine Arts at a very early period. At the age of twenty-five she visited England, and, considering her age and sex, burst upon the hemisphere of painting as a luminous wonder, as independent of her immediate professional qualifications, she can communicate her sentiments in seven languages, and is an adept in Musick; connecting her beauty with her knowledge, and her sweet disposition with both, she is perhaps the most fascinating woman in Europe. In the year 1775 she visited Dublin, and was hospitably entertained by the Nobility; and particularly Mr. TISDALL, then Attorney-General, at whose house she resided, and exercised her talents.

It was her luckless fate to be deceived into marriage by a *Valet de Chambre* of the name of KAUFFMAN, who passed with her for a Saxon Count, but upon a developement of the truth, she purchased her emancipation, but never regained her own esteem. At this period NATHANIEL DANCE was fighting at her feet, and rejected;—she is said to have qualified this repulsion, on the hope of becoming LADY REYNOLDS; but the cold President was too abstracted in thought for the interests of the Paphian boy. After practising for several years in London with great success, she retired to Rome,* where she condescended to wed Mr. ZUCCHI, an inconsiderable Artist, but a worthy man.

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* The late worthy Lord Camelford united to a fine taste in the polite Arts, a patriotic desire to promote them in England: he exerted himself much with the Legislature, to procure for British Artists returning from their studies abroad, the free importation of their works and casts from the antique:—this desirable object he had nearly completed, when his lamented death deprived the Arts and Artists of their common friend. It does honor to the judgment and public spirit of Prince Augustus, that he became the unsolicited protector of this cause, and by his interference procured the indulgence in question.—His Royal Highness returning to Rome, communicated to each of the English Artists, a printed copy,

Considering this Lady, as an Artist, she is too meritorious to be unhonored, yet too indefinite to be exemplary : she is tolerably well acquainted with the antique, but that is not sufficient for an Historical Painter. Her fancy does not teem with variegated images, though what it generates is alluring : to be candid, her designs are so similar, that to see one, is to know all. The greatness of *Rafaelle* was evinced by the variety and application of his characters, as is evident in the *cartoons*. He was unlike Mr. WEST and Mr. COPLEY, who are uniformly pourtraying one old man and

stating the particulars of what had been obtained for them, in consequence of which he was presented with the following Address :---

Address from the English Artists in Rome, to his Royal Highness Prince Augustus

May it please your Royal Highness,

The English Artists resident in Rome, with sentiments of the warmest gratitude, for the recent instance of condescension they have received from your Royal Highness, beg leave to approach you with this public testimony of their acknowledgments.

Your Royal Highness's generous interposition in procuring for us the free admission into England of our own works, is deeply impressed on our minds, nor are we less sensible of the obliging manner in which you have been pleased to communicate to us the result of your exertions.

Permit us to express the happiness we feel in your Royal Highness's unsolicited adoption of our cause, and the flattering confidence we derive from it, of the continuation of your patronage to the fine Arts : they have been planted in England by your Illustrious Father; they will be indebted to your Royal Highness for engrafting on them the purity of ancient taste, and with the benign influence of your Royal House, we may hope to see them flourish with the same vigour under the glorious Constitution which we enjoy, as they did in the most celebrated ages of Greece.

May your Royal Highness long protect and encourage the Arts, so beneficial to the Commercial interests of our Country, so conducive to its glory, so essential to the welfare of society.

We have the honor to be

Your Royal Highness's

Most obedient and obliged Servants,

Gavin Hamilton
James Nevay
James Fowles
John James Rouby
Thomas Pye
Francis Sandys
Alexander Day
Archibald Skerving
John Frearson
William Theed
Henry Howard
James Durno

John Flaxman
John Deare
Hugh Robinson
Christopher Hewetson
George Hadfield
George Augustus Wallis
William G. Outley
Richard Westmacot
Charles Grignon
Robert Fagan
Guy Head.

Rome, April 20, 1792.

and one young woman !—The females which her harmonious, but shackled fancy suggests, are all cast in a Circassian mould, which destroys the necessary truth of character, as much as the squabby, swag-bellied wives of *Rubens*, whom he has obtruded as Graces and Deities. Those who are ambitious to delineate historical facts, should be exceedingly attentive to national lineaments, as well as national drapery.

Though Mrs. KAUFFMAN has convinced the world that she possesses much grace, she has not convinced them that she possesses much truth. Her children are not rotund, chubby, and dimply, but slender and juvenile. *Fiamingo* and *Guerchino* have given us the true character of infants, which Mrs. KAUFFMAN never understood.

I have not seen the works of any female, who could draw the human figure correctly: their situation in society and compulsive delicacy, prevents them from studying nudities, and comparing those studies with muscular motion, though without such aid, they cannot do more than this lady has effected, which is, to design pretty faces and graceful attitudes, without any authority from Nature to warrant the transaction; or to speak more plainly, to offer the blandishments of falsehood, as an apology for necessary knowledge.

Her draperies are generally erroneous, and have been copied from the old expedient of the French school, which is to clothe the lay figure with damp brown paper; but this measure is wrong, as it makes the folds too numerous, and too abrupt, and wholly dissimilar to what would be produced by any species of linen; and to suppose Bacchantes and Wood Nymphs eternally habited in light silks, would be preposterous and absurd.

There are persons who have madly affirmed that she is equal to *Corregio*; but to such writers I disdain to reply.—When *Polidore Virgil* declared that *Rafaëlle* was equal to *Apelles*, he committed a violence on his own character, as a critic, though not perhaps upon probability; and the reason is, that the best works of the Greek were destroyed, whereas the most excellent pieces of the divine Roman were extant, and open to common admiration. It was equally inconsistent in putting *Sebastian* of Venice in competition with *Rafaëlle*. This excessive incense is offered by those weak and misguided persons, who expect that the extravagance of their partialities should be warranted by a popular indorsement, and by being thus wildly zealous, often destroy

the foundation of a fair fame, by awakening cavillers to question even those points of merit, in the Professor, which had been previously considered as admissible. There are few acknowledged enemies more destructive in their malignity, than an intemperate and injudicious defender often proves, by labouring to make that appear as gigantic which is in verity but of common magnitude, and advancing assertions with boldness, which are obliged to recede with reluctance from the test of severe truth.

Mr. FUSELI.

—— FUSELI, R. A. is a native of Switzerland: when he came over to England he was patronised or rather befriended by Mr. CADELL, the bookseller: his first intentions were manifested by publishing several treatises, and it was understood that he meant to profess literature and not painting.

He exhibited his virgin essay with the Society of Artists, at the Lyceum, in the Strand; who continued as a respectable body several years after the institution of the Royal Academy.

Nature has bestowed upon Mr. FUSELI a vivid though wild imagination; were I to say unequivocally that his thoughts were sublime, I should err against truth, and were I to deny that he did not occasionally approach to the sublime, I should be equally false. To be explicit, he is a rare animal, possessing more than ordinary gifts, with less than ordinary judgment; the ardour and enthusiasm of his singular fancy intemperately bursts over the boundaries of prescription; the richest productions of his pencil are calculated for the ages of romance, as he contrives to give a something, more agreeable to the fiery conception of an inflamed Knight, than the sober expectations of philosophy; and though it is conveying a most enviable compliment, he is the most able man, in my opinion, who ever existed, that could as an Artist, do what SHAKESPEARE did as an author, that is—

—— “give to airy nothing,
A local habitation and a name,”

by creating bipedal, extranatural beings, whose seeming form and agency excite astonishment but not disgust.

This gentleman bears the same analogy to historical painters as humour bears to wit; he is among Artists what the fictitious *Offian* is among Poets, an instance to prove how very irre-

irreconcilable we may be to common sense, and yet have a nameless charm for the million, which defies the power of description : but though the childish tinselled incongruities of *Uffian* are pertinaciously upheld by some Scots, and the equivocal monsters of Mr. FUSELI, by some deranged connoisseurs in this metropolis, yet will the gloom of singularity in each, be in future dissipated, by the genial beam of reason. When he paints an object imagined beyond the boundaries of nature, I think he is occasionally highly successful ; but when he substitutes spirits for human beings, and expects them to pass muster, as mere mortals, effecting mortal purposes, I begin to doubt the health of his mind.

As truth is unalterable, such liberties cannot be justified. If RAPHAEL is admirable, FUSELI is not. If NICHOLAS POUSSIN understood the right of composition, the eccentric Artist under consideration does not. It is the peculiar boast of us that SHAKESPEARE could delineate the natural and preternatural with equal effect upon the organization of a judicious audience ; but if he had unluckily attempted to be more than a mortal, possessing not more than the hackneyed powers of humanity, his memory would be attended with ridicule, instead of unlimited honor. There is no correct judgment that will admit of excesses in design where the illustration of history is dependant upon the fancy of the painter ; we naturally recur from the page to the print or the painting, and if the analogy is imperfect, turn away with sentiments of disappointment, if not contempt. From the contour of Mr. FUSELI's figures, speaking generally, I should imagine that his nurse had been proverbially superstitious, and that goblins and demons had been brought forward to embarrass his growing mind ; he seems eternally on fairy ground or in the Tartarean abodes, and without hesitation departs on all possible occasions from the human anatomy and its common attributes. Yet I will not have it admitted that Mr. FUSELI wants genius, though the extravagance of his conception outruns the modesty of simple truth : were SALVATOR ROSA's understanding disjointed, I should expect a similar production from his pencil with those I have seen of Mr. FUSELI ; and as supreme genius is nearly allied to madness, I trust these observations will not bear that complexion of severity to the judicious which the envious will be eager to discover.

Though it works to a reduction of our individual dignity, I cannot avoid observing, that genius is of such a doubtful nature

nature that we receive ninety-nine ideas 'ere we engender one; yet the slovenly man of genius is disregarded, when the sedulous imitator of previous excellence is greatly prized and particularly recompensed. The test of a perfect picture is manifested by the emotions of the heart. We see to be deceived, but we feel to be gratified.

Mr. COSWAY.

RICHARD COSWAY, R. A. was born at Tiverton, in Devonshire, where he was patronised by Dr. NEWTE, and under whose kind auspices, he made the first developement of his ability.

In 1783 he married Miss MARIA HADFIELD, a native of Florence, where her father and mother, who were Irish, kept an *Auberge*. In the early part of her life she was betrothed to Dr. PARSONS, the Composer, who was enamoured of her while in Italy; but on her arrival in London, the Tuscan Daphne abandoned her musical Apollo to despair, and wedded Mr. COSWAY. The ceremony took place at the house of the late Mr. CIPRIANI. This capricious lady has been the theme of much animadversion; she possesses great taste both as an Artist and a Musician; yet to speak plainly she has been thrust too often upon the public eye, which is a situation none can bear long with credit, but those who are unequivocally pure and luminously endowed.

Mr. COSWAY has been too much in the habit of culling from his port-folio the most beautiful sketches of the *Caracci*, and applying them to the personification of himself and his accomplished MARIA. These measures were generally considered as a sacrifice to ostentation at the expence of his discretion; but vanity is a kind of lasciviousness of the mind, which is seldom terminated but in the ruin of its own source.

His muse is not of that chaste and sober sort which can gratify the senses long, after the first effects of captivation are weakened by the judgment. His manner, or rather the manner he has adopted from others, partakes more of the beautiful than the noble. He has studied most rigorously in his time, but those studies have been too much directed to the accomplishment of trifles, and have involved more of a feminine than a masculine ambition. As a Colourist he is fallacious: his tints are not so harmonious as Nature, but are more glaring and uncongenial with the pure principles of optics.

optics. Mr. COSWAY seems to have imbibed the notion that he can make an object prettier even than truth: this is a modern kind of lunacy, but not uncommon. Many of our junior Artists copy the works of a great Master so intensely as if they believed that it was possible for an eminent Painter to be superior to Nature herself: this is a most abominable species of study: it is paying a greater compliment to man than to God: it is a sort of blasphemy on canvass, and marks equally the folly and the arrogance of the Professor.

It is particularly to be regretted, when such men as Mr. COSWAY are meretricious in their habits; inasmuch as he has the ruinous ability to make even his faults in some degree attractive, by the accompanying gracefulness which he can display even in the commission of the most dangerous errors. There is a sort of casuistry in painting as well as argument, which cunningly managed, will seduce the half-observant from the plain laws of modest propriety. His works are specious but not true: he is a flashy but a sophisticated Painter. I would rather have an inch of canvass covered by the simple pencil of *Paul Potter*, than a yard embellished by this spirited deceiver.

Mr. COSWAY is, as a Miniature Painter, what REYNOLDS was in his mightier capacity: he has acquired from the contemplation of the best Masters, the habit of giving dignity to insignificance and grace to rusticity: he has more analogy in his labours with the antique, than any of his compeers; but I think his attempts at Historical Painting are nearly abortive. Upon consideration I do not conceive it probable, that any Miniature Painter who has passed the meridian of his day in flattering, with a licentious pencil, the *rouged* beauties of a Court, can (when these habits of falsehood are confirmed) turn his imagination in the evening of his life, to the true representation of scenes, where Nature must be depicted as unadulterate, variegated, and expressive. To an eye so debauched by extraneous tints and affected attitudes, as every Miniature Painter's in this Capital must be, no part of simplicity can be completely lovely:—it is with them as with repenting courtezans, all their movements, even consequent to the renunciation of a perpetrated fault, will occasionally smack of the original sin.

There was a period when he was mentally convulsed with the horrors of a *second sight*; then he delivered sermons weekly upon *Chironantical aphorisms*; and delineated with the accuracy of magic, the good and evil lines of humanity,
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and became an adept in the Orphean Art*: he was a bigot in the faith of *Geoffry Faustus*, and *Margery Skipton*; when he wanted a lodging he calmly ascended to the third house, and sojourned and feasted among the stars. I shall conclude these memoirs of Mr. COSWAY by affirming, that no man possesses the liberal merit of endeavouring to elevate the characters of his rivals in a greater degree than himself: he is gentlemanly in his demeanor, and kind in his principle; yet every admirer of genius must regret, that a philanthropist so eager to confer a benefit upon his neighbour, should have his mind sicklied over with a superstitious dread, that, for the honor of our system, should be only visible in an old woman.

Mr.

* The Orphean Science, or the Art of Prestiges, as administered by the Ancients, in the days of Sorcery, enabled the Philosopher to subject to his will, the action of every animated, organized being, or individual, as likewise of all other substances, such as stones, minerals, &c. &c. contributing to produce the most surprising phenomena.

Such a necromancer could produce wonders, and excite the greatest astonishment; he could prove the origin of human errors, as originating from the senses, which may be so exalted, and deluded, as to make mortals sensible of objects perfectly unconnected with those very senses: he could shew the possibility of producing a Concert of many, from a single instrument; as also of subjecting the other organs to illusions equally wonderful; he could charm away maladies, and tranquillise a broken heart. He could call from the sepulchre into instantaneous existence, any required object, and make the dust of the antediluvian world communicable; he could expand the heart of avarice, and bephilter the broth of virginity. He could prove, to demonstration, that the internal, as well as the external senses, can be brought to a degree of perfection, which it is impossible for man to arrive at in his natural state; and that every individual sense can so far be rendered energetic, as to supply the place of all others; and make it evidently plain, that Man, together with all other animals, have but one single sense, that of feeling, of which the others are mere modifications, productive of agreement and harmony amongst the other supposed senses, and refer to the soul its various affections, in a due proportion with the discordance destructive of that above-mentioned harmony.

But with regard to the internal senses, which constitute the third harmonic Octave, answering to the Diapason of the first of the Microcosm, the Philosopher could so far operate by the Hermetic Art, and the Science of talismans, as to lull asleep the external senses, and incorporate man in a proper relation, not only with all organized individuals belonging to the inferior or sensible World, but also with the spirits of man, and other intellectual beings, called by him the Superior World. The individuals subjected to these extatic raptures acquire, whilst labouring under them, sentiments of prescience; they discover the thoughts of those who are put in relation with themselves, see whatever is transacted at a distance, and become endowed with universal knowledge, to such a degree as to be able to speak veritably upon the most abstruse subjects, as if they had studied them in academic groves for ages!!!

Mr. HUMPHRYS.

OZIAS HUMPHRYS, R. A. is a native of *Honiton*, in Devonshire, a distinguished County, to which the admirers of genius have been indebted for a REYNOLDS in painting, and a JACKSON in music.

The earlier professional efforts of Mr. HUMPHRY were regulated by a Mr. COLLINS, who painted miniatures at Bath, and was, in his time, in high repute. 'Ere Mr. HUMPHRYS had acquired a sufficient portion of excellence to depend upon himself he visited the metropolis, and studied drawing with Mr. PARS, who kept a school for design near Beaufort Buildings, in the Strand.

The first picture by which he gained celebrity was an exquisite miniature portrait of *John*, the Porter of the Royal Academy; which the King purchased for 100 guineas; after that event he was employed to make a likeness of the Queen, which was exceedingly admired. At this period he conceived the idea that his eyes were not strong enough to sustain the keen and severe duties of miniature painting, and in consequence formed the resolution of going to Rome, to study the principles of oil painting, and the calm beauties of the antique; but he did not succeed equal to the wishes of his admirers.

On his return to England he was invited to the East Indies, where he remained four years, and realized a handsome fortune, but was compelled to return from a decay of his health.

On his arrival from the oriental world he was engaged by the DUKE of DORSET, to paint a Cabinet with likenesses of the Duke's ancestors; but when he had finished nearly fifty, in a fine style, his eyes became so weakened by incessant application as to induce him to relinquish the labour. Since the restoration of his vision he has adopted crayon painting, which is a facile pursuit, which no eminent genius will practice willingly.

 Mr. WILSON.

RICHARD WILSON, R. A. was a native of Wales: he studied originally under HUDSON, and pursued portrait painting until he was sent to Rome; where his frequent contemplation of the serene beauties of the environs of *Tivoli* excited him to forego the measurement of the human figure, and wander sequestered from society, among the hills, the vales, and lakes of classic note. On his return to London he began to embody his studies, and surprised the world

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with his *Niobe*, and *Celadon and Amelia*; which were executed in a style equally novel and satisfactory.

It was the misfortune of Mr. WILSON that he possessed more modesty than is profitable for any agent in this contaminated æra; and this dread of inequality propelled him to absent himself, too frequently, from the rich and titular part of mankind, and mingle with his professional brethren at the Turk's Head Tavern, Gerard-street, Soho; the common rendezvous, at that period, for all the metropolitan Artists who possessed ability approximating to renown. It was his good fortune, in the evening of his life, to be appointed librarian to the Royal Academy; but sinking into a state of second childhood, he was rendered unfit for the station, when the King generously allowed him an annuity, from his privy purse; with which he retired into Montgomeryshire, and there terminated a being, unpropitious, though honored, and miserable, though virtuous.

His choice of nature was singular and admirable: in his more finished pictures, he united the force and fire of *Salvator Rosa* with the delicacy of *Claude Lorrain*: and it was his peculiar excellence to have less of that ruinous tendency which is called manner, in the distribution of objects, than any other Landscape Painter of this age. His breadths have an aptitude and force above all rivalry. His vision was less jaundiced by prejudices, and he viewed his scenery and figures more cunningly and deeply than his competitors. It has been objected to him, that he was slovenly, inasmuch as he painted more for effect than precision; and to become grand, forgot or disdained the littlenesses of the art. He conceived his subject even with as much dignity of mind as *Claude*; though he failed to equal him in the harmony and mellowness of his tints. His pencilling was decisive, and though rough, had many captivations. He was mighty and charming, though negligent. He possessed a bold and impetuous genius. When he committed his thoughts to the canvass, he may be rather said to have *dash'd* in his objects than accurately defined them; yet he managed the combination with such address, as to delude the observant into a belief, that if nature was not exactly as he had portrayed her, it would be better if she were; that more abruptness would make her more lovely, and that she looked with more majesty when convulsed, than when pacific.

Mr. CIPRIANI.

I. B. CIPRIANI, R. A. was a native of Italy: in the earlier part of his life he quitted his native soil, and after travelling through

through a considerable part of Europe, settled in London, where he lived and died at a house in Hedge-lane, near Charing Cross.

Previous to the arrival of Mr. CIPRIANI in Britain, our Artists were slovenly and incorrect in their representations of the human figure : and it must be confessed, that even Sir JAMES THORNHILL, who was the most perfect Historical Painter we had before that period, was very insufficient in that province of the art : but this elegant Italian introduced a style of correctness in the extremities, which has tended gradually to improve our designs, and excite a spirit of ardent emulation : he opened the door of enquiry after truth, in drawing, more broadly than any man had done before him, in this Country. It was, notwithstanding, the failing of CIPRIANI, that he made his figures more agreeably to his own ideas of human beauty than as they really are. Though it must be admitted that we are all wonderfully knit, there are few among us who are unexceptionable in their proportions : and he carried his ideas of perfection so far, as to destroy that diversity of character in his historical compositions, which is constantly apparent in every Country where poverty and disease must necessarily violate that form in men and women, which was originally instituted by nature. It is from this want of truth, that his compositions fail in making that general impression upon the minds of observers, which is and has been attained by men of lesser talent, with more accuracy of attention to the human visage. *La Fage*, who was bred a surgeon, would probably have disgusted us with his affected display of anatomy, had he painted, and not made drawings. *Bonarotti*, with all his majesty of mind, was not unfrequently faulty on this head : he was too ostentatious of his knowledge of the muscles.

In the mechanical parts of the art, Mr. CIPRIANI was not successful : he associated his objects too inartificially, and his colouring was more faulty than his conception. It should be regretted that he spent his time too much about trifles. The most remarkable of his performances are the works in *chiaro oscuro*, on the walls and ceilings of the Royal Academy, and his rape of Orithyia. He was employed by the Government, to repair the fine works of *Rubens*, at the Banqueting-house, Whitehall : for which he had three thousand guineas. His design for the academic diploma will be an honorable testimonial of his knowledge, so long as the frail memorial of a print can oppose the ruin of time.

I shall not arrange Mr. CIPRIANI as a great genius, though he was a great master ; as his imagination was less
powerful

powerful than his judgment: and it should work as an high incentive to industry, in our modern students, to know, that he was principally indebted for his envied reputation to his knowledge of the value of time. Every individual who wishes or expects to become eminent, must consider his TIME as the most important part of his property; it is the channel which under a proper navigation, leads smoothly to the port of honor; it is a sort of universal patrimony, which is received by the creature from Omnipotence, in a greater or lesser portion; and they alone are wise and happy, who uniformly marshal it to the purposes of improvement and content.

Mr. STUBBS.

GEORGE STUBBS, R. A. is the son of a reputable surgeon, and was born at Liverpool, in Lancashire. It is reported of him, that when a boy, he exceedingly delighted in anatomizing every order of animal, but more particularly the horse, to which subject he has since devoted himself with the highest success.

Previous to the professional emanations of this gentleman, we were so barbarised as to regard with pleasure the works of *Seymour!* thereby giving to what was bad, a sanction only due to merit. I do not believe an incapable Painter would have any encouragement to maintain his pursuit, if the common perception of mankind were not so disastrously imperfect; the administration of the senses is expected to produce delight, and if that felicity can be received through a false medium, the vulgar are contented to be thus deceived, as they are never solicitous to appeal to the understanding, to analyse or justify their gross habits in thought and deed.

Perhaps it is not urging too much to aver, that Mr. STUBBS has done his nation honor, inasmuch as he has become, by his genius and his researches, the example of Europe, in his particular department. No Painter, whose works are now extant, had so complete a knowledge of the anatomy of the horse; and the models of horses, in such parts of the antique works as I have seen, are far from being rigorously true: *Le Brun*, *Rubens*, *Cuyp*, *Wouwermans*, and *Redinger*, had each a strong idea of the appearance of a horse, yet none of them were accurately acquainted with their organization:—I have heard some persons assert, that Mr. GILPIN was equal to Mr. STUBBS in this arduous study; but that is not the fact; Mr. GILPIN may have more genius than Mr. STUBBS, but he is certainly less studied in the proportions of that noble animal.

Mr. BARRY.

JAMES BARRY, R. A. is a native of Cork, in Ireland: he visited the capital of England in his youth, and was professionally introduced to society by Mr. STUART, who was at that period publishing his *Views of Athens*, which were embellished by the virgin pencil of Mr. BARRY.—In the same year he went to Rome, under the protection of the *Dilettanti*, and studied in the Vatican and the Italian academies with particular industry.—At his return to Britain, he was warmly patronised by his countryman Mr. EDMUND BURKE, who introduced him to SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS; which laid the corner-stone of his appointment to the *Professorship of Painting*, to which situation he was elected on the death of Mr. PENNY.

The most material work Mr. BARRY has exhibited to mankind, are the series of pictures which he painted for the Society of Arts, &c. in the Adelphi; they consist of six pictures—*The Story of Orpheus*, not treated according to poetical metaphor, but represented truly, as the founder of Grecian theology;—*A Harvest-Home*, or thanksgiving to Ceres and Bacchus;—*The crowning of the Victors at Olympia*;—*The Triumph of the Thames*;—*The Distribution of Premiums* by the Society, in which are introduced various portraits;—and the last and most perfect is *Elysium*, or the state of final retribution to the great and good. This picture is a composition of solemn import, and must ever be considered as the emanation of a comprehensive and lettered mind.

Mr. BARRY has recently etched plates from this work, which he published by subscription: they are executed with spirit; and though not managed with the flow and force of *Marc Antonio*, are nevertheless very creditable to the talents of their author.

As a Lecturer, his manner is awkward, cold, and unimpressive; but his matter is interesting, and fraught with information. Perhaps there is no province of painting which British Artists comprehend so imperfectly as the doctrine of colours. It appears that if the most subtle among them can make an imposing and perishable substitute with varnishes, for the brilliancy of *Rubens*, or the solid pencilling and labour of *Denner*, they are contented. They meanly manufacture their pictures for immediate sale, and not eventual admiration. I believe the colouring of the Venetian school, which has been so much envied and applauded, was effected more by the use of thin and refined oils, than any other cause; at least the commonly ascribed causes are evidently delusive, as all efficient colours originate in *gold*, or *silver*, or *iron*, or *lead*; and all those apparently derived from animal or vegetable sources cannot be effective or durable, unless mingled or influenced by some of the orders of metals: but I confine this assertion to a

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palpable colour, as tints may be so modified and extended, as to envelope and destroy the parental hue. But, alas, we are so thoroughly atmospheric and partially diseased, that a man may see truly in June, who cannot in November! And some are so confirmed in fallacy, as to be never accurate. Some have insisted, that the several distinct ideas of colours, which enter by the eyes, are really different from each other, though at the same time resembling.—Yet, after all our reasoning, who can ascertain what colour is, or is not? * Whoever regards a glass lustre must know, that as it is turned or moved, it presents various and unexpected tints to the eye; and, by a parity of idea, why may not the buoyant atoms so continually before our vision, administer a colour independent of our desire or our investigation? The different shades of colours are assuredly compounded of the original cause of the tint, and the light acting upon that cause. Hence the *Newtonian* axiom is just, that every colour is manifested by light; but what that light is, the wisest being I ever knew cannot conjecture.

Though Mr. BARRY is, generally speaking, intellectually superior to his brethren, he is not practically so—he appears to me, like Cæsar's mother, to conceive too powerfully for the ordinary methods of deliverance.—He is often accurate in design, but never absurd;—he has all *Michael Angelo's* propensities, with a small portion of his strength;—he has more knowledge in his mind than his pencil;—his thought is too ponderous for his mechanism. When he falls lowest, it is in his labour to delineate

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* Il y a une harmonie & une dissonance dans les especes de couleurs, comme il y en a dans les tons de musique : de même que dans une composition de musique, il ne faut pas seulement que les notes y soient justes, mais encore que dans l'exécution les instrumens soient d'accord ; & comme les instrumens de musique ne conviennent pas toujours les uns aux autres ; par exemple, les luth avec l'hautbois, ni le clavecin avec la muzette : de la même manière, il y a des couleurs qui ne peuvent demeurer ensemble sans offenser la vue, comme le vermillon avec les verts, les bleus, & les jaunes. Mais aussi comme les instrumens les plus aigus se sauvent parmi une quantité d'autres, & font quelquefois un très bon effet : ainsi les couleurs les plus opposées, étant placées bien à propos entre plusieurs autres qui sont en union, rendent certains endroits plus sensibles, lesquels doivent dominer sur les autres, & attirer les regards.

Titien en a usé ainsi dans le tableau qu'il a fait du triomphe de Bacchus, où ayant placé Ariadné sur un des côtés du tableau, & ne pouvant pour cette raison la faire remarquer par les éclats de la lumière qu'il a voulu conserver dans le milieu, lui a donné une écharpe de vermillon sur une draperie bleuë, tant pour la détacher de son sona, qui est déjà une mer bleuë, qu'à cause que c'est une des principales figures du sujet, sur laquelle il veut que l'œil soit attiré. Paul Véronèse, dans sa Nôce de Cana, parce que le Christ, qui est la principale figure du sujet, est un peu enfoncé dans le tableau, & qu'il n'a pu le faire remarquer par le brillant du clair-obscur, l'a vêtu de bleu & de vermillon, afin que la vue se portât sur cette figure.

Felicien, Tome VI.

what constitutes beauty—his ideas are too rebellious to harmony, to admit the calm personification of beauty ; its waters are too often ruffled for the purposes of reflection upon genuine loveliness : all his nymphs are Bacchantes, and, agreeably to my thought, there can be no female beauty, where the object is devoid of innocence of heart : a consciousness of guilt will destroy harmony in the most alluring combination of features that were ever arranged by nature ; inasmuch as it breathes an air of meretriciousness in the gesture, and defiance in the eye.

I have seen a spirited sketch by Mr. BARRY, which he, in imitation of such nerveless poets as MASON and WHARTON, &c. called the *Rosy Hours*. This was a neat but weak personification of an ideal absurdity. It should be remembered, that the artists of latter times have been peculiarly fond of noticing the *Rosy Hours* ; though it must be admitted, that appearances have been violently against the notion, that they have been eminently *rosy* or felicitous to them. The truth is, that we are all now either so fallen in our nature, or so unfortunate in our circumstances, that the symbol of roses to illustrate the hours is no longer sufferable. I hope the next artist who undertakes to denominate their qualities, or array the Hours, will hang them round with the *Flowers of Camomile*, and not *Roses*.

He lives in a state of apparent antipathy with the busy world ;—compared with the many, he is a recluse ; yet, though singular, he is not morose ; and no man can be degraded by any habit, that does not make an inroad upon morality, or the well-being of his neighbour. The threshold of his door in Castle-street is so little trodden by friendly visitation, that rank blades of grass issue between every stone ; and many a vagrant heifer wanders from Oxford-market to browse upon the herbage.—He does not hang his peace upon the same hook with his viands.—I believe he has so far sublimed his nature by philosophy, as to despise an extraneous appetite : he allays his hunger and his thirst ; but scorns to promote a luxury appertaining to our vile bodies.—His manners are seemingly austere, but radically kind—it is an incrustation on a gem !

Mr. BARRY invited Mr. BURKE, a few years since, to dine with him on beef steaks and porter ; and literally made Mr. BURKE cook the victuals, while he went to the ale-house for the beer. Perhaps he did this in imitation of *Nicholas Poussin*, with whom a cardinal dined ; and observing that the artist had no servants, the priest was lamenting his situation ; when *Poussin* replied significantly, that he was sorry his eminence had any !

Mr. RUSSEL.

JOHN RUSSEL, R. A. was born at Kingston upon Thames ; he studied under FRANCIS COATES, who was, perhaps, the best painter in crayons that was ever born ; he was infinitely superior to *Rosalba* ; he had a more comprehensive mind, and a finer taste ; his portrait of the queen, from which the unfortunate WILLIAM WYNNE RYLAND engraved a print, as a companion to the king, after a painting by RAMSAY, is the first example of the kind in the world

To investigate the merits of miniature and crayon painters, is scarcely a toil worthy the pen of a biographer. There is no province of the polite arts so thoroughly gulling and imposing as crayon painting ; it captivates the vulgar eye, by a smoothness and gaudiness which should render it disgusting ; and even a bad artist may pass muster in this pursuit, who would be scouted in any other. It requires a great portion of skill not to make the tints too garish for nature ; and that species of knowledge no man possessed in so eminent a degree as Mr. COATES, and even he was not strictly correct on this essential point.

The *chef d'œuvre* of Mr. Russel is a child feeding a rabbit. I have seen two high-finished portraits of the PRINCE of WALES and Mrs. WELLS, from the same author ; but as he was not guilty of making an impressive likeness of either, I cannot arrange them as very creditable to his talents.

In the last exhibition Mr. RUSSEL laboured to soar above himself, in a design for a frontispiece to an Illustration of the Sexual System ; it involved the bust of *Linnaeus*. At the pedestal was a Cupid, indicting the following expressive and explanatory lines with his arrow—

“ Ah ! let not the oppressive huge *Savoy*
Touch the soft fibres of yon *female Plant*,
(Like *Polypheme* on *Galatea's* breast ;)
Such premature embraces I abhor.
Oh ! let the vegetative Maid alone,
Nor watch her at the coming on of eve,
When she would naked lave amid the dew.”

I must take this occasion to express my complete disapprobation of the unqualified uses which are momentarily made of the ingenuity of the philosophic Swede. Would it not offend both Gods and men, to behold an F. R. S. crawling, in the blaze of day, upon his hands and feet, through the mazes of a flower garden, to operate as the he-bawd to an *Auricula*, or peep up the petticoats of a *Tulip*, to ascertain the gender ?—It must be extremely mortifying to the *Vegetable World* to know, that, after
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hiding their amours so many thousand years, they are now subject to the impertinent curiosity of every prying Naturalist, in the face of heaven ; and that an impassioned *Turnip* cannot pay his devoirs to an *Artichoke*, or a *Crab-tree* to a *Gooseberry-bush*, but there are a thousand microscopes directed to the scene ; not merely to discover, but most indelicately to aggrandize, that exertion which, according to my liberal opinion, should be considered as mystic, and held as sacred !

Mr. SMIRKE.

ROBERT SMIRKE, R. A. This gentleman was originally apprenticed to a coach painter, and is a striking proof how very difficult it is, even with men possessing more than ordinary talents, to overcome those habits which the mind, as it may be urged, weds, on her first struggles, to gain the applauses of the discerning part of society.

The earlier efforts of Mr. SMIRKE, as a public candidate for renown, were some small oval designs, illustrative of the leading scenes of *Shakespeare's* drama : these pieces were engraved by Mr. TAYLOR, and are not altogether ill conceived, though the executive part of the engraving, which was the organ through which I formed my judgment, has not, I believe, amended the ideas of the painter ; the nerve of the designs has been considerably relaxed by his graphic coadjutor ; but such instances are not uncommon. It is a very debasing circumstance to a painter, when his labours are perverted by the ignorance and vanity of the engraver, who, not being qualified to copy with justness, debauches the beauty of the original, and totally removes the keen expression and fine sentiment prevalent on the canvass of the painter.

The pernicious effects arising from a ductility of mind, are particularly exemplified in Mr. SMIRK's best productions, which all smack of the first principles of his education ; and whether he paints on canvass or wood, the *hard manner* which all who execute on coach pannels imbibe is evident. If I thought it impossible to rid the conception of such vile peculiarities, I would cease to remark upon the irresistible prejudice : but as I am convinced that our organization is equal to the complete overthrow of any absurdity received through the medium of attainment, I shall not hesitate to reprove those who suffer the false rudiments of a corrupted tuition to enchain the noblest energies of the understanding : though it be clear, that every painter is a mannerist in a greater or lesser degree, it is one of those points of melancholy conviction, which, as hostile to human genius, should be invariably opposed in practice ; and this can be effectually done by studying deeply, not superficially, the cunning but beautiful varieties of
nature,

nature, who, in her multifarious operations, never made two productions even of the same gender unalterably similar. Thus it appears, that to copy nature is to make all her classes of objects dissimilar to each other in the ramifications, though not in the foundation or primordial features of their being. The vulgar and the inconsiderate cannot comprehend these necessary and refined distinctions of the duties of study; the indolent and the self-sufficient will not: thus it appertains to the honorably ambitious only to uplift themselves, and become exemplary and estimable, by incessantly seeking after truth.

I have seen some emblematic performances lately, upon the pannels of the carriages of the City Magistrates, which, independent of their want of a due portion of *relievo*, do Mr. SMIRKE credit; but the doctrine of relief seems not to have made any material part of his study; in consequence, his figures want that rotundity essential for the purpose of deceiving the eye. In the pieces which he has executed for the *Shakespeare Gallery*, and which he appears to have laboured to make his masterpieces, there is, notwithstanding the subjects are of a vulgar tendency, too much of the *grotesque* for any exhibition of natural truth, where the figures are not studiously selected from among the crippled and distorted members of society. Mr. SMIRKE has more of *Hemskirk* than *Hogarth* in his imagination, and prefers the extravagant issue of misfortune, which moves our pity, to *outré* features, unconnected with depression of thought, which excite our ridicule: he seems to be somewhat too much indebted for his ideas to *Callos's* beggars. I have scarcely ever examined any of the recent productions of this artist, without having my curiosity terminate in a regret, that so much correct execution should be prostituted to enforce the embodying of a vulgar idea.

Many artists of different nations, but particularly England and Flanders, appear to have thought that the kind of satirical personification which we denominate by the term *humour*, consists only in violent expression, and that when they are extremely unnatural, they are extremely comical and satisfactory. Such have illaudably endeavoured to assimilate bestiality with humanity, and valued themselves upon their powers and address, when they could make it in any degree apparent, that the visage of a monkey, a bear, a horse, or an owl, could approximate by management to the likeness of our own kind. When such arts are used to give a ludicrous illustration of the Pythagorean system, they are commendable on the score of ingenuity, as applicable by prejudice; but when they are dragged and arranged upon the canvass to illuminate an historic event, which should be severely regulated by chastity of imagination, the judicious observer will turn away in disgust. As this debasing sort of study polluted the taste of *Leonardo da Vinci*, it surely cannot be highly profitable to Mr. SMIRKE.

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The interests of discretion and delicacy should be as carefully preserved in the movements of an historical painter as a moralist. *Le Brun* had a fiery and overbearing genius, but wanted that judgment which regulated the works of *Nicholas Poussin*. I am persuaded that the celebrated Battles of Alexander by the former would excite more admiration among the undiscerning parts of society, than even the cartoons of *Rafaele*; because the subjects are more striking and congenial with the immature expectation of a fettered and common mind. But we look in vain for that dignified sobriety which is the fruit of deep thinking. There can be no true harmony of composition, when the fancy is more prevalent than the reflection. Genius is to the understanding what the courser is to the charioteer; it is a power that cannot act with glory when unrestrained by the checks of an investigating spirit. To combine figures of varied age and quality, and to bestow upon each that separate degree of interest which is suitable to their several characters, and yet to order the countenance and gesture of each so justly, that all shall be subservient to the grand design, is not, nor cannot be, within the sphere of ability of any, whose intellects are not enlarged and brightened by unceasing study.

That candidate for renown who would wish to become great, as an historical painter, must endeavour, with a sort of noble phrenzy, to leap over the barriers of humanity—he must exercise his pencil with the desires of an ambitious soul, and grasp at beautiful phantoms which he believes to be. There cannot be a doubt but that the imagination has been infinitely indebted to superstition; and when the painters of the oltrumontane schools exercised their fine talents in embodying the hallowed personages instrumental to the establishment of their faith, it begat an enthusiasm and undescribable ardour in their bosoms, which a meaner theme unquestionably could not inspire.

MR. HAYMAN.

FRANCIS HAYMAN, R. A. was the descendant from a reputable family in the west of England; he originally studied under Mr. ROBERT BROWN, an inconsiderable painter of portraits, whose merits may be properly ascertained by two mezzotinted prints of children, copied from his works by MACARDELL.

In point of seniority, Mr. HAYMAN should have been placed at the head of the English school of Historical Painters; and the more especially of the present Royal Academicians, of whom he may with propriety be considered as the father: it is necessary to note, that he was the first librarian of the Royal Academy; he was appointed to this situation, with its emoluments, in consideration

ration of his bodily infirmities, which in the evening of his life pressed him hardly : he died a martyr to the gout, and his death was sincerely regretted by all who had the felicity to know him.

FRANK HAYMAN possessed all the volatility of youth to his last hour, much sterling sense, and an agreeable pleasant manner, which early introduced him to an intimacy with the *bon vivants* of the age in which he lived ; among the rest FLEETWOOD, then manager of Drury-lane Theatre, paid him particular attention ; he in a manner domesticated himself with him, painted his scenes, and after his death married his widow.

HAYMAN seems to have modelled his manner in the old English school : a rough blunt sincerity bespoke the man : he possessed a large fund of good humour, with something more than a common portion of wit ; and had so much poignancy of satire in his composition, as to make his enemies afraid of his force : even *Hogarth* was so sensible of this, that he always softened down his accustomed snarlings against the ancient masters when in the presence of HAYMAN, who, though denied the advantages of an Italian pictorial education, uniformly paid the highest compliments to the merits of *Michael Angelo*, *Raphael*, and the rest of that illustrious groupe ; and had he possessed those privileges which his pupil *Nathaniel Dance* enjoyed, of finishing his studies at Rome, in the classic bosom of the arts, would have done honor to the English school. To establish this assertion, we have only to recur to his embellishments of *Sir Thomas Haumer's* Shakespeare, which he illuminated in conjunction with *Gravelot*. and though a more splendid illustration of the works of our immortal bard is now in a state of luminous progression, I do not believe that the sense of the divine poet has been more completely understood : indeed I do not hesitate to give it as my opinion, that his *Falstaff*, in the scene between the *Prince* and *Poins*, will stand the test of the severest criticism, as far as character and expression are involved.

Though his domestic and dramatic representations, which now decorate the boxes of Vaux-hall Gardens, and the grand room, have been decried, and justly, upon the score of heaviness and unappropriate colouring, yet there are points of merit visible in them, which it would be difficult for our best living artists to surpass : the composition is generally agreeably managed, and though the drawing of the extremities is partially clumsy and imperfect, we can see enough to convince us, that HAYMAN was a man of genius, if not a perfect painter : he was as an artist, what Lord *Bacon* was as a philosopher, the reviver, if not parent, of a new and better species of historic study.

When HAYMAN was painting his picture of the British heroes for the room above-mentioned, the gallant and good-natured Marquis of Granby paid him a visit at his house in St. Martin's-lane,

lane, and told him he came at the desire of his friend *Tyers* (the proprietor of Vaux-hall Gardens) to sit to him for his portrait ; " But FRANK," said the hero of Minden, " before I *fit* to you, " I insist on having a set-to with you." HAYMAN not understanding him, and appearing surprised at the oddity of his declaration, the Marquis thus explained himself : " I have been told you were one of the best boxers of the school of *Broughton*, and I am not altogether deficient in the pugilistic art, but since I have been in Germany I am a little out of practice ; therefore we'll have a fair trial of strength and skill." HAYMAN pleaded his age and gout as insuperable obstacles. To the first position the Marquis replied, " there was very little difference between them ;" to the latter, " that exercise was a specific remedy ;" and added, " that a few rounds would cause a glow of countenance that would give an animation to the canvass." At length, to it they fell ; and after an exertion of much skill and strength on both sides, HAYMAN put in such a blow in the stomach, or, as it is phrased by boxers, *broad-basket*, of the Marquis, that they both fell with a tremendous noise, and brought the affrighted Mrs. HAYMAN up stairs, who found them rolling over each other on the carpet, like two enraged bears.

In the great point of professional taste, HAYMAN could not be arranged as exemplary. Yet I have many doubts if taste is in any instance wholly intuitive ; and am inclined to think that we acquire taste by the progressive movements of early perception, which, by frequent subtle inroads upon the mind, make, in the issue, an establishment, and give a system and a hue to thoughts. We may discover original genius in a savage, but never any symptom of that correct association of idea and action, which constitute that practical excellence which we denominate taste. This desirable endowment or grace of deed is a beautiful offspring engendered by the judgment upon imagination, and assuredly cannot have a being with those who have not been stimulated more by honor than necessity. Yet we are so restricted in faculty, as not to enjoy a perfect equipoise between the suggestions of the fancy and the authority of the understanding.

Mr. HAMILTON.

WILLIAM HAMILTON, R. A. bears an accompanying apology for his insufficiency, as he was the pupil of ZUCCHI, from whom no sufficiency in the art could be manifested.

This gentleman, as a colourist, has a considerable portion of merit, although his manner is a *melange*, made up from the manners of many ; his drawing and his conception are subject to much animadversion, as his figures are too long for nature, and

too fantastic for human agency : he seems to have been bit by Mr. FURZEI, and to have imbibed all his extravagance, without any of his fire. I do not think the attitudes of his personages appropriate, or their expression conducive to the purposes of the historian or the poet. When he aims to be elegant, we have the Circassian ladies of Mrs. *Kaufman* at second hand. Mr. HAMILTON, in common with his brethren, seems to imagine that no female can possess lovely blandishments, who does not appear as having recently issued from the Haram of a Sultan : but our modern artists, like our modern women, debauch each other. True beauty is as much dependent upon virtue for the points of sober admiration, as the moon is upon the sun for its illumination.

In his designs for *vignettes*, he appears to me as the most *ingenious pilferer* I ever knew : but as this objection applies to nearly all our historical painters, and *all* our musical composers, I will not dwell upon the theme. In this province of the art, which is so much prostituted by garish pretenders, who can neither *think* or *delineate*, there are but two persons who are equal to the illustration of an author, Messrs. *Stodhart* and *Kirk*.*

This indecisive, but fortunate gentleman, had six hundred guineas for decorating the pannels of Lord *Fitzgibbon's* state coach ; and had he continued as a coach painter, he would have had more of my approbation. His whole-length portrait of Mr. *Kemble* in *Richard the Third*, is a glaring instance of his temerity, as all the limbs are either disjointed or broken : it is necessary to observe that it appears even thus in the print, although engraved by Mr. *Bartolozzi*. It is curious that *Michael Angelo*, who was the best and greatest master of his time, should have his works so imperfectly copied, as to be nearly worthless, and that such men as Mr. *West*, Mr. *Hamilton*, &c. should have their works so brilliantly executed, as frequently to envelope the original errors of the painter !

His portraits do not possess much of the required qualifications : they are in common hard and dissimilar ; it appears that in his efforts to make the sitters more than human, he makes them less. I do not know any living artist to whom I would so eagerly fit for an immediate and faithful resemblance, as Mr. *Gabriel Stuart*† ; as, I believe, he sees his object, and the infinity of tints constituting

* Mr. *Kyle* studied under Mr. *Cosway*, and does his master honour ; he has given an higher character to the illustrative *vignettes* of our nation, than any of his competitors, excepting Mr. *Stodhart* ; and this assertion is clearly exemplified in *Coske's* beautiful edition of the Poets.

† Mr. *Gabriel Stuart* is an American ; he studied in the principles of the art under Mr. *West* ; he practised portrait painting with much success in London ; but, from motives of either caprice or necessity, he removed to Dublin ; and from thence to New York, where he now resides,

tuting that object, with more perspicuity than any other existing portrait painter. But I should add, that he is indebted for this faculty to the paucity of invention; having no fancy that impels him to sport with the inveterate accuracy of lineament.

Mr. WHEATLEY.

FRANCIS WHEATLEY, R. A. The first essays of this gentleman were of that inferior class as not to ensure much promise: his original principles of the art were exceedingly erroneous; and I have much reason to believe that his principal attainments have been made since he turned the corner of his thirtieth year.

Mr. *Wheatley* was long favoured with the intimacy of the late regretted Mr. *Mortimer**; who was a disciple of *Hudson's*, and an Historical painter of the first order in Great Britain. He drew better than any other man in England in his time; and though somewhat too indolent, his inactivity did not preclude him from distancing his competitors: he was a great cricketer, a *bon vivant*, and a gentleman. Mr. *Wheatley* did not suffer this acquaintance to pass away without reaping some advantages from the connexion; as by continually copying his drawings and paintings, he gradually acquired a style more pure than that which he originally practised, which was something between the manner of *Hayman* and *Gravelot*.

About twenty years since Mr. *Wheatley* paid a visit to our sister kingdom, and met with great encouragement from the persons of taste and fashion in Ireland: he chiefly painted likenesses in small whole lengths, and gained some reputation by his picture of the interior of the Irish House of Commons, with portraits of nearly all the members. The point of time he chose was when Mr. *Grattan* was making his motion for a repeal of *Poyning's Act*. This picture was afterwards disposed of by raffle in the city of Dublin.

On Mr. *Wheatley's* return to England, he endeavoured to alter his manner, by copying *Greuze*, a French artist of much notoriety in domestic scenes: and in this sort of pursuit he has continued with but few interruptions ever since: he appears to have imbibed the prejudices of Mr. *Greuze* so far as to give his low subjects

* *John Mortimer* studied at the Academy for Design, instituted by Sir *James Thornhill*, in St. Martin's-lane; the terms were one guinea and a half per annum, for the privilege of studying after life. Here he attended so rigorously, that it was believed he never missed a night in the most inclement weather. This gentleman, in concert with Mr. *Wheatley* and Mr. *Durno*, were employed by Lord *Melbourne* to decorate his fine seat at Broomfield-hall, in Herts. He married a Lady in Norfolk-street, in the Strand; where, previous to his death, he etched some characteristic heads from Shakespeare's drama; he was thirty-five years of age when he died, and left a high reputation behind him as an historic painter.

subjects the airs of French peasantry. It is but bare justice to observe, that Mr. *Wheatley* has infinitely more nature, as *Greuze* is hard and stony.

Mr. *Wheatley* is a very indifferent colourist, and does not seem to view nature with a correct vision. Of all the senses we commonly enjoy, in the ordinary scale of humanity, there are none which are so variously deceptive as *Seeing*: it is from this imperfect organization that we have so many bad painters and bad critics. As a drawback on his merits, Mr. *Wheatley* is too much a mannerist.

This gentleman appears to have too small a portion of ambition in his system, to accomplish any great and durable undertaking: to copy a mean model satisfies his unambitious soul. To be coldly perfect on a vulgar theme was the peculiar characteristic of the Flemish school: yet the productions of that school are not of the first order; and if we except *Reubens*, *Vandyke*, and *Jordaens*, they had scarce any association of ideas, originating from a nice observance of nature, and regulated by the glow of fancy, and prevalence of abstract thinking; for even *Teniers*, with all his merit, was a painter without learning.

His grouping of the figures, in his picture of *The Riots* in 1780, is not truly commendable. There has been a print engraved from this picture by Mr. *Heath*. When I first saw it, it struck me as an attempt to prove how very completely an artist could make a *Sky* in a composition eclipse every other consideration. Mr. *Wheatley* has recently painted some historical subjects for the *Shakespeare Gallery*, with more address than usual: perhaps the spur of competition impelled him to be more industrious than he was accustomed to be. But it is an undecided point, whether that spirit of circumvention which we denominate by the soft term *emulation*, proceeds from the regard we have for our own reputation, or the hatred which we call forth to resist the triumph of a rival.

MR. COPLEY

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, R. A. is by birth an American: he is indebted to his countryman Mr. *West*, for his initiation into the practical knowledge of painting, which he possesses in no inconsiderable degree.—The gale which wafted him across the Atlantic to the cliffs of Britain, was delegated by his good fortune; the colonies which nursed him being then too immature for the adoption of that public spiritedness, without which the more elegant Muses must pine and perish.

The first piece which drew Mr. *Copley* from silent insignificance to the beam of general notice, was his performance of *The Shark biting off the limb of Mr. Brook Watson*; and singular as the opinion

nion may be, I think it is equal, if not superior, reviewed as a whole picture, to any thing he has published ; it certainly has fewer faults, if it is not so glaringly obtrusive.

His picture of *The Holy Nativity* is unquestionably deficient in all the incumbent requisites for such a work ; the immaculate mother reclines unconscious of her divinity, and is made to regard the *Salvator Mundi* with an air of despondency, rather than ineffable joy ; and her white drapery is so inveterately modern, that it furnishes a lively notion of a female haberdasher in the third week of her *accouchement*. Had the Virgin never conceived more miraculously than Mr. Copley, I must apprehend the tribes of Christ would have been in a dolorous situation.

His portrait of *The Infant Princesses* is all flutter and folly, flowers and ribbands ; it seems, at a distance, like a bed of tulips disturbed by the wind ; and is certainly more calculated for the meridian of taste at Coventry or Cranbourn-alley than a Royal Palace. When I first regarded this picture, I was compelled by its *presuming tone of colouring* to wink involuntarily ; yet what does all this overcharged style of tinting, this levity of pencilling prove, but a sedulous attempt to make finery overthrow truth ? There is a sober loveliness in all nature, which disdains to assign such pert tawdriness, so intolerant a command over the senses.

I shall forbear to criticise, at present, upon his *Death of Major Pearson* and his *Siege of Gibraltar*, as my comments might be more injurious to the encouragers of the arts than the immediate Artist. His *Death of the late Earl of Chatham* is considered to be his best and most finished performance. This piece, viewed generally as a *composition*, is not disreputable ; but in a partial sense the *grouping* is erroneous ; the *design*, which I mean should comprehend the laws of perspective, is false almost to puerility, as the figures congregating under the throne, are too much diminished, when contrasted with the figures in the fore-ground, for any scale of action so very limited as the House of Peers within the bar. The *Repose* of this picture will become proverbial ; it may be almost described as “darkness visible,” and we may fairly presume that most of the company are afraid of meeting the light.

The local accompaniments to an historical painting, but especially where the interests of death are involved, should be, like the score to a solemn piece of music, all forcibly rushing on the senses, to accomplish the end of the material design, and to regulate and harmonize the whole. The exactness of analogy in the component parts of a production like this, ought to be correspondent even to the last demands of scrupulousness. The optic vision should convey the images satisfactorily to the eye of the mind ; which cannot be when the palpable agency of the figures is undevoted to the maintenance of the grand subject :—there can be no apology offered adequate to the omission of such required intelligence.

ligence. I would recommend to the notice of such an Artist, in such circumstances, *The Death of Germanicus*, by *Nicholas Poussin*.

I believe it will be admitted, that Mr. *Copley* is a man of imitation, but not a man of genius; he is a man of thinking, but not a man of singular conception: his professional acquisitions are a greater compliment to his assiduity than his powers of fancy: perhaps no artist existing understands the mechanical part of his profession better, or the *costume* less; and if celebrity could be attached to him who copies *Still Life* with correctness, this gentleman might not dread the unpleasantness of being superceded by any of the modern schools.

Mr. *Copley* appears contented to pass through life (to use nautical language) in the wake of his countryman Mr. *West*; he has the same hardness of execution, the same veneration for buttons and button-holes, and that accuracy of ornament so dear to the fastidious genius of Bedfordbury; and the same apprehensions of having any reliance upon the vigour of his intellects. In a limited sense such caution would be commendable; but it should not form the primary excellence of any who proudly assume the appellation of an Historical Painter—to whose character we must annex a portion of the sublime, ere we can consent to set an high value upon the fruits of his pencil. That artist who cannot paint well in the absence of a model, has widely mistaken the inclinations of his ability, and makes what he wishes to be, a satire upon what he really is.

As an observing inveterate drudge, who is true to trifles, from a conviction that he can never be great—who attends to all the mechanism of colouring, without welcoming a thought that would be honorable to the imagination, and dear to the *poetry of canvases*, I shall not hesitate to arrange Mr. *Copley* as among the first of modern artists. Yet perhaps this may be considered as administering a compliment to his discretion, at the expence of those noble faculties which, it is concluded, make up a great genius. But, to talk of any man possessing genius, who is so immoderately fond of money, is preposterous: the warm beams of genius thaw the icy altars of avarice; and to have genius, and be ungenerous, is impossible.

MR. WESTALL.

RICHARD WESTALL, R. A. like *Hogarth*, was originally an engraver on silver; and deserves much credit for the resolution he has manifested, by bursting from the vulgar confines of such an employment.

As *Pope* was a poet who preferred the nice arrangement of words to the general construction of sound sense, so Mr. *Westall* adopts, with the most scrupulous affectation, all the littleness of the art, and seems resolved to make that fine, which he cannot
make

make soberly grand. Had I known the private history of this gentleman less, I should have believed that he had been exclusively educated among ladies, and rendered, by the means of a perverted tuition, more delicate than aspiring; and could not, like the mighty son of Peleus, evince his native fire, when emancipated from the feminine circle. As the younger part of females are more solicitous about the external graces of their lovers than the morality of action, so do these *Retainers of the Brush* express more eagerness about that nauseous tawdriness of colouring, which is highly disgusting to a pure taste, than that calm and dignified repose and harmony of tint, which renders the works of *Titian* and *Claude of Lorraine*, so charmingly impressive and fascinating.

I never saw a tinted drawing by Mr. *Westall*, without recurring to the idea of a pretty painting upon a fan or china. I could not perceive in any, those touches or traits which characterise the productions of a potent imagination. Mr. *Westall* appears too limited in knowledge to have any perfect idea of grace: this alluring property of motion is often visible in an *infant* and a *savage*, because they are unsophisticated by the prevalence of artificial thinking or action. No animal departs so much from the grace of nature in attitude, as an uneducated human being in what we call civil society; and this arises from the impulse of an *imbibed* shame, issuing from a false sense of error.—His Designs, to illustrate *Milton*, are not of that fascinating sort, which come under the denomination of capital: they are replete with delicacy, it is true, but are not in any point communicative of that grandeur, which should be irresistibly evident, when the Artist boldly undertakes to embody the Demon and his flashes of diabolism. The unlicensed extravagancies of Mr. *Fuzeli* would be even more congenial with the ideal, though absurd struggle for dominion between the hosts of heaven and hell: we may entertain a notion of the opinion which *Michael Angelo* would fulminate on a review of such productions from the well known demeanour of the Ex-chancellor to a coxcomb.

In the prosecution of this light and trivial kind of study, our young artists are not so blameable as the public, who are so preposterously eager to countenance what should be systematically rejected. There is a frivolity in the age, which is baneful to the interests of modesty and merit:—it is in literature as in the arts, those volumes are the more eagerly perused, which meet the eye in the shape of what are termed novels, though the language is flimsy and unclassical, and the argument contaminating; while the solid effusions of wisdom are neglected, as too heavy for the understanding, and too inimical to indolence and gallantry!

The most spirited sketch I have seen from this gentleman's pencil, was in the last Academic Exhibition. It was *A Scene after a Battle in Abyssinia*. The vultures seemed replete with all the rage of hunger, and sitting over the fallen sacrifices with becoming

becoming triumph. I understand there is to be a print engraved from this design, which is to be inserted as an elucidation of the Metempsychosis, or Pythagorean doctrine. Though the scene is in Abyssinia, the ravenous birds are supposed to have been hurried from the Stygian shore, and are presumed to be the unquiet spirits of some defunct practitioners in the King's Bench and Common Pleas! It is fortunate when an artist can thus blend morality with delight.

It belongs to the empire of painting to effect the noblest purposes, by an efficient delineation of scenes, that might be admirably instructive, as instances of high achievement and enticing virtue. The Pagan and Christian ages are pregnant with subjects, that would be effectual, as tacit monitors, to correct and chasten our nature, when adequately portrayed: but if every cheek is to be pencilled into a childish representation of the bloom of a plum or the down of a peach, the characters will excite ridicule from the discerning. Mr. *Westall* has latent capabilities, but they are suppressed and poisoned by a bad taste.

JOSEPH WILTON.

JOSEPH WILTON, R. A. is the son of a plaisterer, in Titchfield-street, London. He studied sculpture under the late Mr. *Dufoe*, in Flanders; and removed from his protection to Rome, where he remained for several years, looking at the antique*. He succeeded the late Mr. *Weston*, as librarian to the Royal Academy.

The most perfect of his works that I have seen, is a monument lately erected in Westminster Abbey, to the memory of Sir *Archibald Campbell*; in which he has introduced a figure which it is probable he might design for *Fame*, but which appeared to me as an inebriate wench who had stumbled, with the trumpeter's clarion from the Horse Guards, over the medallion; and was bending in the momentary dread of copious expectoration. Yet who can deny, but that Mr. *Wilton* may be playing the satirist in disguise, and have intended this strumpet as a personification of that sort of purchased corrupt renown, which is hourly belching forth her applause upon hourly imposture!

It was not in allusion to works like those, which made *Plautus* exclaim—

Usque ab ungulo ad capillum, summam est festivissima.

Est-ne? Considera: vide signum, pictum pulchre videris.

I know not if his remorseless chissel has tortured into fragments the Parian or Achaian marble; but I hope the rage of his art has been expended upon coarser materials; although his labors might be innoxious and anti promethean, and awaken not the wrath of Jove by a too inveterate resemblance of either *God* or *man*.

* The word *antique*, as applied by artists, comprehends all the works of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, which were performed in Egypt, Greece, and Italy, from the reign of Alexander the Great, to the invasion of the Goths; yet it is more particularly applied to Sculpture than the rest.

Mr. THOMAS SANDBY.

THOMAS SANDBY, R. A. was born at Nottingham, in the year 1725, where his tribe had long lived and flourished as reputable weavers. It is reported, that when his father first presented the family shuttle for his management, he rejected it with a decent denial. The truth is, that he was absorbed in contemplation upon a new system of perspective, which he progressively pursued, until he brought it to a state of unequalled perfection and readiness of application; and, acting upon these novel rules, he made a drawing of his natal town, which procured him such a reputation, as emboldened him to visit London for the purpose of having it engraved. The developement of his ability occasioned him to be appointed as draughtsman to the Chief Engineer for Scotland; in which situation he was, at Fort William, in the Highlands, when the Pretender landed; and was the *first* person who conveyed intelligence of the event to Government, in the year 1745. In consideration of his merits and his services, the *Duke of Cumberland* appointed him his peculiar draughtsman; in which honorable capacity he attended the Duke in his campaigns in Flanders. On his return to England, he devoted himself to the study of Architecture, in which his talents and genius carried him to those heights which excite common envy. For the essential duties he had fulfilled, he was made Deputy-Ranger of Windsor Great Park; in which situation he remains, without any display of his architectural knowledge, except in the instructive Lectures, annually given in his capacity of *Professor of Architecture*, in the Royal Academy.

From that gloomy epoch, when the Turk destroyed the splendour of Greece, to this moment, Architecture has been on the decline. *Cardinal Bessarion* and *Sophianus* did much towards the restoration of its pristine grandeur; but their efforts were not equal to the resistance of that stream of barbarism, which was contaminating both the Oriental and European empires: but, as the *taste* and *character* of Britain is my more immediate care, I shall briefly exhibit the state of building in its capital and the vicinity.

MODERN ARCHITECTURE.

Our modern villas are precisely like modern manners, replete with a sort of daring forwardness. Our fathers, such as *Inigo Jones*, *Wren*, &c. built their edifices in some degree to correspond with their decent demeanour; they in general appeared as receding modestly from the gaze of the vulgar, and as hiding themselves partially in the angle of a grove, by the brow of a hill, or peeping from the vernal dell. But the country houses of the fashionable now, from a peerling to the sloop-seller, evince by their state the disposition of their owners; they have gaudiness without taste, proportions without beauty, and an interior

rior without usefulness; they seem as if they had been placed in such situations only to offend the judgment, and tacitly enforce your attention by thrusting themselves upon your sight.

All the asperity which characterizes the *Abbe Du Bos*, when speaking of the genius of the people of this country, as applying to the fine arts, is justified, if any permanent encouragement is given to the authors of such undescribable edifices as *Carlton-House*, *York-House*, *Drury-lane Theatre*, and other heterogeneous buildings, whose appearance is even hideous to a correct eye. I mean no offence towards the persons from whom these structures originated, but I cannot avoid lamenting, that any thing like national or splendid encouragement should be directed to the nurturing or enforcing a slovenly system of error, which must eventually render us contemptible in the eyes of Europe, as a people of taste, and unjust in our administration of protection, inasmuch as we seem exclusively to sustain those in the higher departments of the art, who are not properly qualified to discharge the arduous duties requisite in such a palpable and important situation.

The general character of the times, in all countries, is more dependant upon the vestiges of art than any other circumstance; and as the labours of architecture are more ample and exposed than the labours of her relatives, Painting and Sculpture, it becomes us (if we regard our good name with posterity) to be circumspect and reflective, ere we engage those to erect the pile or mould the monument, whose habits of thinking and restricted knowledge, are disproportioned to the completion of our wishes.

CARLTON HOUSE.

Those who are accustomed to denominate *Carlton House* a palace, must certainly mean to arrange it as a place where a Prince resides, and not where a Prince *ought* to reside. We too indiscriminately, and sometimes rashly, abuse the Goths on the score of barbarism; yet in what instance (in this island) have the Goths violated the grace of order and the chastity of art more grossly than in the clumsy residence of the Heir Apparent? It forms, on the whole, such an association of contrarieties, as is extremely disgusting to an enlightened mind. What constitutes individual beauty, but the exact proportion which one part bears to another? And the same observation and conviction applies to the works of architecture. Is it not monstrous to see an huge and impudent colonnade, stepping forward as a striding bully to protect its shabby principal behind, which seems to skulk beneath its arrogant advanced guard, and peep upon the public between its manifold legs; when it should have been so constructed, as to have come boldly forward, and demand common admiration, independant of such meretricious accompaniments?

As it was in the reign of George III. that the arts ceased to be considered as exotics, and began to assume a feature congenial with our hope and our pride, it must not be permitted that any thing base, or coarse, or unprofitable, should take root and become stationary, to the detriment of so fair a garden. We must not become retrograde in our movements, when we profess to be journeying towards perfection. There is no province of the arts where licentiousness of manner is less justifiable than in architecture; and the plain reason is, that the rules for action are more immediate and determinable than in any other; the elements of knowledge are less complicated, and every man should be faithful in the execution and appropriation of the parts, though every man cannot be sublime *in the conception of his subject*.

The churches of this metropolis are, generally speaking, a disgrace to the taste of the kingdom; but especially those which are denominated as *Queen Anne's churches*. I believe *Kent* was the architect, and a wretched builder he was. We have no ecclesiastical edifice in London deserving particular notice, excepting Saint Paul's church; Saint Paul's, Covent Garden; the interior of St. Stephen's, Walbrook; the steeple of St. Dunstan's in the East; and the portico of St. Martin's in the Fields, which is borrowed from the temple of Theseus, at Athens.

Were a stranger to look attentively from an eminence about the metropolis, at the multiplicity of buildings dedicated to the purposes of piety, he would be instantaneously inclined to suppose us the most devout people under heaven, and the fondest of architectural beauty; yet, upon a nearer scrutiny of our manners and our buildings, he would assuredly recede from that impression, so favourable to our morality and our taste, and adopt others of a contrary tendency. Of all the churches in London, how few are to be classed as even tolerably just in their proportions?—When the architect first imagined the form of Saint Luke's church, he must have been inclined to sport with our toleration, and erect a tall something, that might become the standard of absurdity; it always furnished me with the idea of a mile-stone run to seed! Why the Creator should be adored in a temple less regular and magnificent than the Pagan gods, I cannot devise. Before any public building is erected in this kingdom, it ought to be submitted to a Committee of Taste; who, being competent to the determination, should either receive or reject those plans which, if carried into effect, would reflect honor or dishonor upon the nation!

The deviations from the common orders of architecture which have been introduced into practice by Mr. *Adams*, in the Adelphi, and other places, have done a material injury to the interests of gracefulness in building: the orders of architecture operated

rated like the force of morality in social life, and kept the imagination within the due bounds of propriety. That person who would labour to justify the puerilities of the *Adametic* system, I am confident would be inclined to prefer the curvettings of a dancing-master, to the sublime movements of the Belvidere Apollo. The fripperies and littleness of a painter, may sometimes be apologized for by concomitant attributes; but frippery and littleness in an architect cannot; they betray a callow mind, that is incapable of embracing or enforcing what should be arranged as the great points of science and nobleness.

The impost upon windows has impelled the builders to elude the tax in new houses, by making what are termed Venetian fashies, or laying two windows in one, which is a method equally disgusting and contemptible. I have frequently regretted that there are no Supervisors of Taste, appointed by government, to prevent the building of such incongruous hovels, as cover St. George's Fields, and other places contiguous to town. As beauty, even in building, operates happily upon the senses, a due regard for our own comfort, should incline us to resist such a tide of abominable errors. There is another absurdity introduced, under the pretence of making the most of the ground, which is the placing shop-doors at the corner of the building. This practice is contrary to every rule in architecture. It is, moreover, of a dangerous tendency, as it greatly weakens a building, the chief stress of which lies on the corners. Hence "A corner-stone" is a proverbial expression for "a chief support." What should have introduced this novel fashion is to me inconceivable. I grant, that in very narrow streets it is a convenience to have the corners cut off or rounded. But then, to preserve any decent appearance, this form should be continued all the way up. A sharp angle, projecting over a door, is a disagreeable object, and is in some instances avoided, in the way now recommended; as for instance, in several new houses, between Chiswell-street and Smithfield. But the other displeasing arrangement, to my great astonishment, appears in some of the capital houses about Finsbury, where no one advantage could be proposed. Our best architects should take this matter into consideration, and prevent the further progress of a fashion, for which they will find no precedent in antiquity, nor any plea in common sense.

Mr. NOLLEKENS.

JOSEPH NOLLEKENS, R. A. received the first rudiments of art under *Scheemaker*, a Sculptor of inconsiderable talents, and some of whose best productions are affixed in Westminster Abbey. When Mr. *Nollekens* was emancipated from his obligation to Mr. *Scheemaker*, he went to Italy, where he contrived to mix the *utile* with the *dulce*, and acquired several thousand pounds
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by (what he termed) mending dilapidated statues for the travelling *Dilettanti*.

I have heard much, from my early acquaintance with the subject, on the necessity of sending students to Italy, that they might purify their own ideas of grace and greatness, by the models of Grecian and Roman origin, and the best specimens of what is phrased the second and third ages of the fine arts: yet, to what purpose can these attainments operate, if the patronage of the opulent and the powerful is indiscriminately, if not *partially*, directed, to uphold those who are ignorant of the principles of science, and wholly regardless of celebrity? If it is ever received as a truth, that a Professor can do as well without knowledge and information as with it, we shall have youth without ardour and rivalry without ambition.

Mr. *Nollekins* appears to study the antique in his works more than Mr. *Bacon* or Mr. *Banks*; yet neither have the ability to be poetic in their labours; they are rather justly mechanical than illuminated. But the gift to be sentimental in marble is an inborn emanation, which no Briton ever possessed, as a sculptor, in so eminent a degree as the meritorious, but unfortunate, Mr. *Proctor*. They are as ignorant of the subtle and delicate ramifications of *expression*, as theologists of a catholic principle.

The monument on the north side of Westminster Abbey, sacred to the memory of the late Captains Lord *Robert Manners*, *Bayne*, and *Blair*, is a well meant memorial on the part of a great nation, but is no proof of any very high ability on the part of the sculptor who executed it. The martial female figure, regarding the event, is managed with spirit; but the accompanying boys are deficient in all those required points of grace, which so wonderfully distinguish our attitudes, before we have acquired, by age and observation, a sense of shame.

Rafaele is not more confessedly superior to all competition, on the article of *ideal grace*, than *Fiamingo* is in the natural positions, and incomparable subbiness of his boys: perhaps I do not urge too much in his favour when I aver, that he equalled, if not eclipsed, the best among the Greek sculptors, in representing infantine humanity: they may be literally denominated *Babes of Grace*. It is to him and his fine chissel that we are indebted for all the lovely boys which Mr. *Cipriani* copied as Cupids and Zephyrs, and which Mr. *Bartolozzi* has so justly engraved.

Of all the sculptors ever resident in this nation, *Roubiliac* was unquestionably the most excellent; and though he flourished before the regal institution of a national Academy, we have had none since who could approach him in their monumental labours: and it is to be deplored, that the most beautiful of his tombs are hidden by official understrappers from the public eye.

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But even admiration, in this mean country, is made a source of dirty commerce.

That sort of sculptural merit which forces itself upon investigation, in the gloomy aisles of an abbey, is more calculated to serve the artist, than exertions of equal merit in any other situation; and the reason is obvious, as the mind is more wedded to contemplation in such sequestered and inspiring scenes, than it could be in the public bustle of the elbowing mart.—The solemn objects that encircle us in an ancient Cathedral, cast a sort of sacredness around the spot, where it is notified that the dust of the great and good is deposited. As every object is magnified to the vision, when viewed through the medium of fear, so is every object ameliorated to the vision, when viewed through the medium of veneration!

SIR FRANCIS BOURGEOIS.

Sir FRANCIS BOURGEOIS, R. A. Knight of the Polar Star, is a presumed relative of *Le Charlatan des Tableaux*. He studied under Mr. *Loutherbourg*, at the same period with the younger *Bannister*, of Drury-lane Theatre; and, like him, impels us to laugh at a comical representation of natural objects. At the recommendation of Mr. *De Calonne*, the unfortunate *Stanislaus*, of Poland, made this ambitious artist a Chevalier; and I trust, that the calamities of his being, will not be considered as an expiation of the investment.

In defining the qualifications of this painter, I shall deliver my opinion briefly: *viz.* that he knows but little of *colouring*; but little of *perspective*; but little of the *human anatomy*; and less of *effect* than either.

The most laboured performance I have seen, ascribed to his pencil, was an *Eruption of Mount Vesuvius*; and in truth it was a representation so terrific, as might frighten the demon himself. The Mountain at that period must have been troubled with a disorder in her bowels, brought on, perhaps, by swallowing a builder's inheritance, as she appeared to be convulsed with agony, and spitting forth nothing but *tiles, lime, brickbats, and red oler*.

What Sir Francis Bourgeois might do in *Chiaro Oscuro* I do not pretend to ascertain; but as to his method of colouring, it is disgustingly unappropriate; be it element or animal, it appears to me of the same treachy hue. I suspect that the proud Knight believes himself not too much indebted to Nature, and by the way of resentment towards the lady, makes all her works b——t.

It has ever been a principle with me, that there can be fewer apologies offered for an indifferent Landkip Painter, than any other, who practices the representation of what I shall denominate *active life*; and the reason is, that the objects represented

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are more determinable, more palpable, and less connected with that beautiful association of ideas, which constitutes, in the issue, the *grand gusto*.—I think, if it were possible for an inquisitive Indian to study landscape painting, agreeably to the primeval constitution of the mind, that he would discover beauties, which are to us impervious ; as our vision is jaundiced by prescription, and our faculties chained by a servile imitation of an example, and not nature.

I have now committed Sir Francis and myself to a general scrutiny, and one of us must be humbled in the issue : if he deserves to be a Royal Academician, I deserve shame. They call me the Tyrant of the *Arts* and the *Drama* ; but if it is tyranny to be just, I shall despise the opprobrium, and maintain my principle. I disclaim every motive, but that of supporting the dignity of the Polite Arts. I would be as impartial as *Polybius* :—but, when I behold a man (however amiable in private life), acting as a public generalissimo, who is not gifted to be a centinel, I will assert my right of reprobation, in despite of the threats of folly, and the assassin's dagger.

It appears to my imperfect understanding, that the purposes of a Royal Academician have been miserably misunderstood. When an artist becomes invested with this distinction, he should acknowledge to have received it as a charge in trust, for the general advantage of the Professors and profession, and not for the immediate accomplishment of his own particular and narrow purposes.—It is probable that the cloudy period is near, when the term *Royal Academician*, like that of *Doctor* ; shall be principally assumed by the stupid, as a luminous passport among the vulgar—as a titular cap to hide the ears of the assine.

Notwithstanding all the deprecation, terror, meanness, and misrepresentation, which the publication of these strictures have occasioned, it has not been my view to be illiberal towards any :—I would admonish, but not destroy. Life is too short to admit of our being perfect in any stage of our endeavours, much less in the *Polite Arts*, where the points of study are so numerous : yet as without goading, the sluggish would be nearly motionless, the rod of reproof is occasionally necessary, and mutually requisite to the salvation of our fame.

How must the Muses mourn, to behold, in what is termed the superior classes of society, the want of discernment and knowledge, or, more properly speaking, TASTE, which is the fruit of both ? Surely that hour will never be permitted to arrive, when the saucy habits of Presumption shall be more necessary to our interests than study ; when all the gentler virtues attributable to susceptible and trembling merit, shall be swept from our presence, and a spurious, bloated, brazen race, rush from their dark dens, and usurp their situation : I am agonized to feel, that
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the present state of *patronage* very nearly justifies such a dispiriting alarm.

On a contemplation of the present state of society, as relative to general encouragement, the mightiest evil to be regretted is, that the **VULGAR**, who have no knowledge of propriety, should, from their numbers, their riches, and consequently their power, have the national patronage within their dominion ; and yet these bipedal reptiles must be uniformly soothed and solicited, under such a forcible designation, as

THE PUBLIC.

The community of England has been most aptly characterised under the appellation of **JOHN BULL**, as a more stupid **BEAST** was never led to the reeking altars of Folly :—*its vision is not gratified by beautiful objects, nor its intellects by the arguments of wisdom ;—it weeps for the brevity of life, yet egregiously labours to kill time ;—its theory is a tissue of illusion, and its practice a positive error ;—it listens to be flattered, and not informed, and is most happy when most deceived ;—it presses such a polemic blockhead as GIBBY WAKEFIELD to its heart's core, while it urines upon the ethics of the moral world ;—it impiously annexes to kings the infallibility of Gods, and attaches to its God the propensities of a butcher, whose primary enjoyment is a conflagration from his own puppets ;—it arrogantly bubbles of its measureless credit, while Europe is dragging the blatant beast to the ordeal of insolvency ;—it treats Philosophy as a monster, because it cannot comprehend truth ; and hugs every impostor that will tickle its savage attributes ;—it acknowledges but two signs for action or passion, the Goat at its meridian, and the Crab in its dotage ;—its prejudices are antecedent to its desires, and both are inimical to simplicity ;—it hails Plutus as a deity more propitious than Jove, yet treats Phœbus as a vagabond ; and while the Beast is enlightened by his glorious beams, it winks at the illumination, and calls it Pain !—it regards an exotic paragon with scorn, and bullies Science as a harlot ;—it will gambol unawed around the crater of a volcano, yet affect an apprehension from the prophecy of a madman ;—its loyalty resolves into non-resistance, and its gallantry into lust ;—it rewards what it should punish, and punishes what it should reward ;—it suffers a wile priesthood to rob it of all temporal comfort, that it may establish a claim for reimbursement on eternity ;—its faith subdues its thought ; and its dread of what is not, the enjoyment of what is ;—it argues to deride, and acts to be despised ;—it eagerly resigns its richest meadows for Guilt, and Presumption, and Vanity, to fatten ; but withholds sustenance from modest worth and heaven-born Genius !—We have read of the Golden Age, the Iron Age, and some have improperly denominated this the Age of Reason ; but I will venture to affirm it is the Age of Lead in which we consent to breathe.*

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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